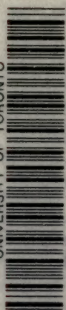


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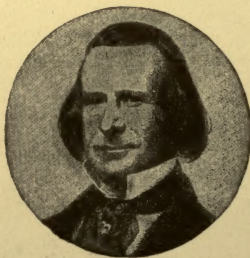
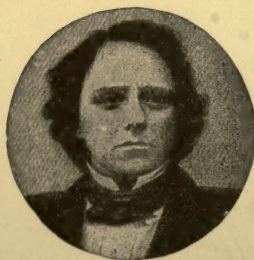
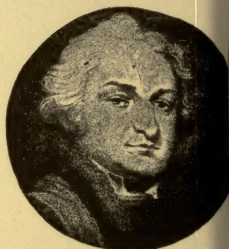
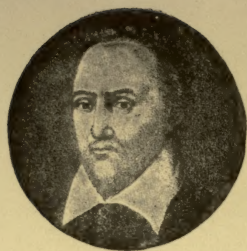


**SHAKESPEARE  
ON THE STAGE**











SHAKESPEARE

THOMAS BETTERTON

RICHARD BURBAGE

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ON

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THIRD SERIES

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HANNAH PRITCHARD

BY

WILLIAM WINTER

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SHAKESPEARE, FROM THE  
DROESHOUT ENGRAVING

JOHN  
HENDERSON

"This money shall be a pattern or a measure here."

—SHAKESPEARE

LOUISA NESBITT

LUCY VESTRIS

NEW YORK

MUFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY

SAMUEL PHELPS

G. V. BROOKE

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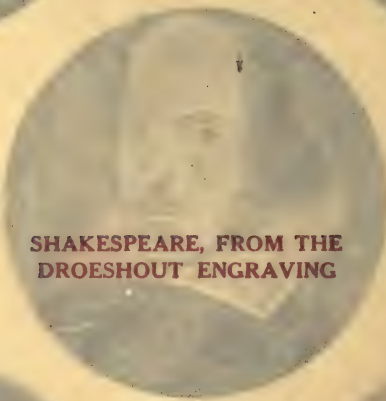
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SHAKESPEARE  
ON  
THE STAGE

*THIRD SERIES*

BY  
WILLIAM WINTER

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"Their memory shall as a pattern or a measure live."

—SHAKESPEARE

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NEW YORK  
MOFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY

1916



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To

MARY ANDERSON

(Mrs. Antonio de Navarro)

Whose Beautiful Impersonations of  
*Juliet, Rosalind, Hermione, and Perdita,*  
Winning the Public Heart  
And Ennobling the Public Mind,  
Have Made Her Name Imperishable  
In the Record of Fine Histrionic Achievement  
Expositive of Shakespeare's Genius,  
And Whose Brilliant Theatrical Career  
Was Delightful to the Community  
And Honorable to Herself,

I DEDICATE

These Studies of the Poet She Loves  
And the Art She Adorns

---

*Noble and gentle, she will not disdain  
The honest praise that Truth and Memory give,  
Nor deem my ardent longing wholly vain  
That with her gracious name my book should live.*



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## PREFACE

*The completion of this book brings me one step nearer to the end of an exacting task to which I have long been devoted, and the full accomplishment of which will provide lovers of the Stage with an authentic general view of the manner in which the Plays of Shakespeare have been exhibited in the Theatre of Great Britain and America from the time of their origin till the present day. (When the work was begun I had hoped and intended to revisit Germany and to travel through Germany and Austria, visiting the leading theatres of those countries, witnessing performances of Shakespeare adaptations as given there, and to devote a supplementary volume exclusively to an examination and account of the performances thus observed. The war in Europe has ended all hope of my ever accomplishing that purpose.) The narrative, I believe, will be found interesting, and since reviewal of the Past furnishes guidance for the Future, I venture to hope that it will prove useful not only to students of the great dramatist, but particularly to those votaries of the Stage who labor for the right representation of his plays. Such endeavor*

*as was practicable has been made to rehabilitate some of the actors of former times, at least by suggestion, and to indicate the wealth of genius, intellect, ambition and toil that, through many generations, has been expended in the histrionic illustration of Shakespeare. In the choice of plays to be treated in this volume I have, as before, sought to obtain contrast of subject. My original intention was to begin this book with "The Tempest" and end it with "Much Ado About Nothing," but I have found it convenient to change my plan. The three volumes now published of the series contain a compendium of the Stage History of twenty of the plays. Fourteen remain to be considered—or sixteen, if each part of "King Henry VI." be viewed as a separate play.*

*Shakespeare is the basis of our Theatre. Without him, though we should still possess a Theatre, it would lack the adamantine foundation which it now possesses. This would be so for the reason that from among the thousands of plays in our language we could not assemble one series like his, containing in practicable form and consummate expression every elemental type of human nature and every representative phase of human experience. Shakespeare is the voice of universal humanity, and it is in him that the actor finds the amplest vehicles of embodiment and utterance. Almost all his characters afford unusual opportunity for acting. The greater ones provide histrionic art with absolute freedom,—certainly with*



*a broader scope than is obtainable anywhere else. OTHELLO, KING LEAR, HAMLET, MACBETH, FALSTAFF, IMOGEN, PORTIA, ROSALIND, BEATRICE, JULIET, HERMIONE, to name only a few of those great parts, are unequalled in the whole wide range of the drama, for what they contain and for the depth and compass of feeling and the liberty of action which they require. The utility of the study of Shakespeare, therefore, and the duty of the dramatic profession to maintain him in the Theatre, alike for its own sake and for the public good, cannot be too earnestly advocated.*

*The Plays of Shakespeare, indeed, have survived their maker more than three hundred years, and throughout a part of that time actors have been sporadically diligent in the representation of them and numerous assemblies have seen and heard them with pleasure and profit; whence it might be inferred that they need no advocacy. That would be an error. The best things, in every form of art, do not at once appeal to the multitude. The audience for them, at first, is small. Their advancement is dependable on the diffusion of intelligence, the widening of thought, and the development and growth of taste. Shakespeare's Plays made their way slowly, and in some periods of their history they were in abeyance and forgotten. Even at this late day, and after all the recent almost world-wide celebration of his name, he remains to multitudes an unknown author, while*

by many who imperfectly know him he is flouted as effete and tedious. The great plays require great exposition. The subject should be kept steadily before the people. The more they know about the Plays of Shakespeare the more they will delight in them. Any effort tending to promote the reading and study of those plays and the correct and suitable presentment of them in the Theatre is an effort to enhance the public welfare, and therefore worthy of the public favor. In writing this series of books about SHAKESPEARE ON THE STAGE I have hoped that they might be deemed contributory to that good object and to the maintenance of the legitimate drama, because sympathetic with the ambitions and labors of Shakespearean actors, helpful to students of the great dramatist, and assertive of the Stage as a potent intellectual force and refining influence.

The consideration of plays which are based on history necessarily involves some portrayal of historical characters. Five of the plays considered in this volume,—“Cymbeline,” “Coriolanus,” “King Henry IV.,” “Antony and Cleopatra,” and “King John,”—are, to some extent, based on history, and many historical characters emerge to view in them, fashioned and colored by the dramatist, sometimes in accordance with authorities known to have been accessible to him, sometimes according to the impulse of his imagination. Upon some of those historical characters

*I have expressed opinions, which, as also the conceptions of the dramatist, the student will test by critical examination. Facts, when duly ascertained, sometimes rather harshly correct the fancies embedded in the pleasing pages of fiction. No discrepancy could be sharper, for example, than that which exists between the Cleopatra depicted by the poetic dramatist and the Cleopatra portrayed by the prosaic historian. The former is a marvel of allurements; the latter is a prodigy of repulsion,—for the historian coldly alleges that she killed her brother with poison, agreed with Octavius to assassinate her paramour, Antony,—the father of three of her children,—and committed suicide, with the asp, only because she knew that Octavius, declining to succumb to her enchantment, would lead her as a captive in his triumphal procession into Rome.*

*After long musing on the manner in which Shakespeare's Plays have been used on the stage, reflection naturally turns to the subject of the treatment which, informed by experience, they ought to receive. Each of them, for representation in the Theatre of To-day, it is rational to contend, should be so condensed that the performance of it will not occupy more than about three hours. The text should be relieved, wherever possible (and as to this point good taste is the right, and should be the final and inexorable, judge), of all foul or vulgar language. There is no sacrosanct quality in the writings of Shake-*



*speare or of any other author. Descriptive passages, manifestly superfluous when the scenes which they describe can properly be shown, should be discarded, because needless. Passages of literary quality which neither facilitate exposition of character nor expedite movement, and by which sometimes the action is impeded, also can be spared, without injury to the effect of the play, and there should be no compunction about excising them,—but the adapter should invariably exercise scrupulous judgment. Some passages occur, in some of Shakespeare's Plays, which are as tedious as a twice-told tale, and also some passages occur which are obnoxious to decency and good taste, and for the use of which there is neither necessity nor justification. These, happily, are few, and English Literature would have lost nothing if they had never been written.*

*The wild enthusiasts of the great dramatist and poet, of whom there are some, who insist that his plays, if acted at all, should be acted precisely as they are fashioned and written, are not reasonable. The dramatist is not treated fairly when treated in that way. He wrote for an ill-provided stage, and there is reason to believe that some of his plays as they have come down to us contain language that was foisted upon them by other writers. He was constrained sometimes to furnish passages that either would measurably supply the place of scenery or would describe action and change of circumstance*

*that he could not or did not choose to show. He was often careless of congruity. Agreeable presentment of some of his plays, precisely as they stand in library editions (which, in some instances, are built on several texts), might, perhaps, be effected, but that method of exposition applied to others of them would certainly tend to display their defects in bold relief. The tragedy of "King Richard III.," for example, performed in strict accordance with the library texts (or even with that of the First Folio), would show itself tediously verbose. It is not true, as urged by sticklers for the exact, literal "original text" (not all of which exists as it fell from the pen of Shakespeare), that every word is essential to the development of plot and the revelation of character, and therefore necessary to be spoken. HAMLET is as well understood by an audience as he ever can be, even though he forbear pronouncement of a part of his long speeches. The massive intellectual drama in which that wonderful character occurs has, occasionally, on the English-speaking Stage, been acted in its entirety, but only by way of experiment and the exhibition of a curiosity. It was so performed in London, and at Stratford-upon-Avon, not very long ago, by F. R. Benson and his company, the representation occupying six hours,—the first half being acted in the afternoon and the second at night. It was an interesting spectacle, no doubt,—but only for once.*



*After more than sixty years of devoted labor in advocacy of Shakespeare I believe I may, without presumption, declare that he has no more reverent and loving disciple, "this side idolatry," than I am; but I love him for his beauties, not his defects, and I deprecate extravagant, unintelligent, effusive laudation of him. The Plays of Shakespeare, fine and precious as they are, are not perfect, and all of them are not of equal value or equally worthy of production in the theatre, and I venture to maintain that the endeavor to discriminate between the merits and the faults in them is neither to fail in love and reverence for a marvellous, beneficent genius, nor to assume a narrow, Puritanical attitude toward what the cant of modern "progressive" criticism (which is not criticism at all, but merely blather) designates "the great realities of life." Let us have Shakespeare, but not too much of him; and let us not make ourselves ridiculous and the dramatist tiresome by talking of him as if he were Uriel, the Angel of the Sun.*

*The establishment has often been suggested, as likely to be highly beneficial and therefore as highly desirable, of a National or Municipal subsidized theatre, in which the presentment of plays could be made without, primarily, consideration of financial profit,—a theatre in which things could be done because in themselves splendid and worthy of being done, and not exclusively for the purpose of gain-*

ing money. Such a theatre, rightly organized and judiciously managed, would not only prove a blessing to the community but, I firmly believe, would be financially remunerative. It should not, however, it seems to me, be a National, State, or Municipal institution; if it were, it would be endangered or ruined by corrupt political control,—because, unhappily and undeniably, there is considerable corruption in the politics of our country. The safer expedient, surely, is that of private ownership and endowment, and it is my conviction that the management of such a theatre should be intrusted to one executive head, a person chosen because proved and known to be capable, whose authority, during tenure of office, should be untrammelled. New York, now the largest city in the world and certainly the foremost city of the Republic, would appear to be the place in which such a theatre should be established, and, if it should come to the city, a rational hope would be that it might come as the New Theatre came, but be controlled and conducted in a wiser way. The failure of that noble enterprise,—a failure as needless as it was disastrous and lamentable,—was due to bad organization and bad management. The experiment, eventually, as prosperity expands and education prevails in the advancement of learning and taste, may be repeated. There is already a rumor current that the public-spirited Otto H. Kahn, undismayed by the melancholy fate of the New Theatre,—in which he took an interest so gen-

*erous, active, and practical,—is, in association with committees incidental to the recent Shakespeare Commemoration in New York, intent to further erection and endowment, in the metropolis, of “a Shakespeare Theatre,” to be managed by “an organization of artists, scholars, educators, authors, and others,” to be devoted to the presentment of Shakespeare’s Plays and to be fostered by “a fund to bring about an adequate expression of the community spirit of the Theatre.” The meaning of that phrase is obscure. In a life-long, close observance of the Theatre I have never discerned in it anything like “a community spirit.”*

*A theatre founded and managed with really intellectual purpose could readily be made financially profitable (a thing much to be desired) as well as enjoyable and beneficial to the Public, though probably not if its administration were confined exclusively to the presentment of Shakespeare, and certainly not if tainted with the sickly nonsense of “New Thought” and “Modern Method,” and conducted by a social coterie. The notion of management by an organization, artistic, educational, and miscellaneous, is at once ominous of failure. Art is individual. I have often been asked to join various “Poetry,” “Drama,” and “Shakespeare” societies, and some surprise, and even resentment, has been evinced because of my refusal to do so. My reason for avoidance of such societies is that, while I suppose them worthy in*



*motive and design, I believe them to be practically useless and, probably, detrimental. Community has become a dominant social power,—as the French philosopher Fourier long ago foretold that it would become,—and it undoubtedly is good, in certain fields of labor; it is not good in the Arts. That, at least, is my conviction; and I am unable to entertain any sympathy with the actors, authors, and other artists who would turn Art into a communal enterprise or a trade union. “A composition of genius,” said Gibbon, “must be the offspring of one mind.” No great artist and no work of genius has ever been produced, or can be produced, by societies, combinations, or “community spirits.” The artist, whether poet, painter, sculptor, actor, or whatever else, is an individual in whom the great art impulse exists, reinforced with the great faculty of expression. That impulse and that faculty are innate; they do not proceed from societies; they cannot be created.*

*A theatre is, rightfully, a temple of art, and it should be managed by a person who is an artist and who also knows the world and possesses the genius of leadership and the executive faculty for business: it is erroneous to suppose that those abilities cannot co-exist. Garrick, Macready, Samuel Phelps, Charles Kean, Irving, and Daly, among managers, were all, essentially, “good business men.” Henry Irving was so good a business man and so great a genius that he raised the Theatre to an eminence which it had never*



*before occupied. A vital need of the present period is a theatre devoted not exclusively to Shakespeare's Plays,—which, undiversified, would become monotonous,—but to legitimate drama and legitimate acting; a theatre pledged to give a reasonable number of performances of Shakespeare every year, so that the whole Shakespearean repertory might be made and kept familiar to the people, commingled with other good plays, old and, when possible, new, and conducted judiciously and tastefully, on sound business principles. Such a theatre, so subsidized that it could endure in spite of adversity; independent; safe from the degradations of commercialism, would be an impulse to our civilization and a material aid to the public happiness.*

*I have alluded to the injury done to the Stage by "commercialism" in theatrical management, and here I would define what I mean by "commercialism." I am the more desirous of doing so in this place because a conspicuous and respected Shakespearean actor, Edward Hugh Sothorn, who has recently taken a formal farewell of the Stage, has also recently appeared as a vindicator of a deceased theatrical manager, the late Mr. Charles Frohman, who has been named (by me, among others) as a prominent representative of that powerful and sinister influence. Mr. Charles Frohman was one of the unfortunate persons who were brutally murdered by the Imperial German Government, May 7, 1915, in the sinking of the steam-*

ship *Lusitania*,—a crime which has stained with indelible infamy the historic record of the German Nation. Mr. Frohman met his death with exemplary fortitude and dignity. That was noble,—and all of us must hope that we may meet the inevitable hour with equal courage. Since his death Mr. Frohman has been warmly extolled, because of his amiable, generous, excellent personal qualities and his commercial integrity. That is natural and right: he occupied a conspicuous position, his friends loved him, and in the horrible manner of his taking off those friends have found a more than usually urgent prompting to extol his virtues and honor his memory. These considerations, however, are wholly irrelevant to the question of what, as a theatrical manager, he represented. Mr. Frohman explicitly, and more than once, declared that he considered the Theatre to be a Shop—and nothing else; and, of himself, as a theatrical manager, he publicly said “I keep a Department Store.” He also, in a published article, stated his views and his position, making the singular assertion that his shop-keeping ideal of the Theatre, the Drama, and the vocation of theatrical management was likewise that of William Shakespeare. In his practical administration of the Theatre,—whatever may or may not have been his personal predilections,—he displayed a willingness, if no more, to produce any kind of play,—no matter how offensive it might be to a right standard of taste, or how injurious it might be to the public

morals, and therefore to the public welfare, if only such production appeared likely to prove profitable. That fact shows the blighting spirit which dominated the administration of the Theatre of which he was a leader,—a spirit which has infected almost the whole administration of it, in England as well as in America, and which, in the dominant control of it to-day, is supreme throughout our country. It is that spirit which I designate “commercialism.” It is an evil influence; it has greatly injured our Theatre and our Society, and in particular it militates against the regular, suitable, salutary, and needful presentation of the plays of Shakespeare on our Stage.

The illustration of this series of historical studies of SHAKESPEARE ON THE STAGE provides ample occasion for the use of several hundred pictures in each volume. Authentic portraits are exceedingly helpful in a work of this character; incidentally, much can be learned by comparing the faces of actors of the past with those of actors of the present; and I regret that the extensive illustration which is so desirable is, unhappily, not feasible. The liberality of my Publishers, however, has enabled me to include many pictures, and scrupulous care has been taken that they should be appropriate, trustworthy, and instructive. Many old portraits exist, showing players of the remote past, in assumptions of Shakespearean character, which, while mildly interesting as curiosities, are useful only when, as sometimes happens, they



*exhibit instructive details of costume. A few pictures of this class, showing famous old actors in grotesque attire, have been introduced, because exhibitive of the vagaries of histrionic dressing in old times. Most of the portraits, though, will, I believe, be approved as affording lively views of important players, and as distinctly harmonious with my text and supplementary to it. Those showing John Philip Kemble and Edwin Forrest as CORIOLANUS and Ellen Terry as IMOGEN are, it seems to me, admirable.*

*The mean and silly practice of striving to belittle the achievements of the Past, with the view of extolling those of the Present, is exemplified among actors and votaries of contemporary acting when those persons bring forth, as sometimes they do, "old prints," of the obnoxious kind described and vended in England as "penny plain and tuppence colored," by way of evidence that the actors of Long Ago were absurd objects, only to be recalled with contempt and derision. No person acquainted with the subject would seek to extenuate the defects of the early Theatre, whether in England or America, or deny that some ancient fashions of dress prevalent on the Stage (and also off of it) were ridiculous: but the citation of fantastic "old prints" is merely puerile; it proves nothing—except that the making of bad pictures of actors, an industry still prosperous, was an occupation of early date. The "thumb-nail sketches" with which some of the tasteful journals*



of this halycon period often embellish their dissertations on contemporary acting might as justly be proclaimed fair depictions of the worthy actors of To-day,—whom, in fact, they often grossly caricature. Pictures can be found which represent, for example, Garrick, Kemble, Kean, and Macready, Cooper, Forrest, Booth, and Davenport as little better than scarecrows. Authentic portraits of them, in private and in assumed characters, tell a different story. There is at the Garrick Club, in London, a remarkable collection of theatrical pictures,—many of them, I believe, originally assembled by the elder Charles Mathews,—which show many old actors, women as well as men, in their true guise; and it is indeed a galaxy of genius, intellect, and beauty. A kindred collection exists at The Players, in New York,—the club that was so generously founded and endowed by the great Shakespearean actor Edwin Booth, in 1888.

In gathering illustrations for this volume and its two predecessors I have made every effort to do justice equally to the players of the Past and of the Present. In this effort I have been specially aided by my old and valued friend Evert Jansen Wendell, Esquire, of New York,—to whose courtesy I am indebted for the loan of many originals from his collection, which is one of the largest and richest in existence. A signal service would be rendered to the Stage and its followers if a copious selection of Portraits of the Players could be made from Mr. Wen-

*dell's archives, and reproduced in splendid, uniform style, with brief biographical and critical comments on the persons thus commemorated. The work is feasible, and perhaps I may be instrumental in causing it to be done. Many excellent theatrical portraits of actors of earlier days exist, particularly those made by Brady, Sarony, and Falk, the loss of which would be deplorable.*

*In making the edition of my writings since 1908, now in progress of publication, and in which these books about SHAKESPEARE ON THE STAGE will occupy a conspicuous place, I have been fortunate in the devoted assistance and judicious counsel of my son, Mr. Jefferson Winter, whose constant affection has cheered my age, who has aided me by valuable practical suggestion, by encouragement in times of languor and depression, by sympathetic, confident belief in the utility of my labor and thus, especially, by impartment of impulse to persistent effort. Two, if not three, additional volumes are required to complete this history; if, by reason of death, it should not be completed by me, my hope is that it will be completed by him.*

*This year has witnessed an almost world-wide observance of the three-hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare's death, thus signally testifying to the immortality of genius. In deep sympathy with the spirit of that homage I venture to reprint, as an affix to these preliminary words, a tribute to the poet, which I wrote, many years ago, in the church at*

*Stratford-upon-Avon, where he is buried. I do this to please myself, trusting, however, that it will not displease any one else.*

*W. W.*

*New Brighton, Staten Island,*

*New York.*

*September 16, 1917.*

## AT SHAKESPEARE'S GRAVE

*No eyes can see man's destiny completed  
Save His who made and knows th' eternal plan;  
As shapes of clouds in mountains are repeated,  
So thoughts of God accomplished are in man.*

*Here the divinest of all thoughts descended;  
Here the sweet heavens their sweetest boon let fall;  
Upon this hallowed ground begun and ended  
The life that knew, and felt, and uttered all.*

*There is not anything of human trial  
That ever love deplored or sorrow knew,  
No glad fulfilment and no sad denial,  
Beyond the pictured truth that Shakespeare drew.*

*All things are said and done, and though forever  
The streams dash onward and the great winds blow,  
There comes no new thing in the world, and never  
A voice like his, that seems to make it so.*

*Take, then, thy fate, or opulent or sordid,  
Take it and bear it and esteem it blest;  
For of all crowns that ever were awarded,  
The crown of simple patience is the best.*



*"Far from the sun and summer gale  
In thy green lap was Nature's darling laid,  
What time, where lucid Avon stray'd,  
To him the mighty mother did unveil  
Her awful face: the dauntless child  
Stretch'd forth his little arms and smiled.  
'This pencil take' (she said) 'whose colors clear  
Richly paint the vernal year;  
Thine, too, these golden keys, immortal boy!  
This can unlock the gates of Joy;  
Of Horror that and thrilling Fears,  
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic Tears.'"*  
—THOMAS GRAY.

*"When Learning's triumph o'er her barb'rous foes  
First rear'd the Stage, immortal SHAKESPEARE rose;  
Each change of many-color'd life he drew,  
Exhausted worlds and then imagin'd new:  
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,  
And panting Time toil'd after him in vain.  
His powerful strokes presiding Truth impress'd,  
And unresisted Passion storm'd the breast."*  
—DR. JOHNSON.

## I.

### CYMBELINE.

*" . . . Whispering tongues can poison truth,  
And constancy lives in realms above,  
And life is thorny, and youth is vain,  
And to be wroth with one we love  
Doth work like madness in the brain."*

—COLERIDGE.

#### DATE OF COMPOSITION.

THE chronological place of "Cymbeline" in the list of Shakespeare's dramas has not been ascertained. Dr. Simon Forman, the astrologer (1552-1611), in his "Book of Plays and Notes Thereon," etc., which relates exclusively to the years 1610 and 1611, records that he had seen a performance of it, at the Globe Theatre, London, but does not mention the date. Coleridge and a few other commentators concur in the fanciful conjecture that the dramatist wrote it in his youth and expanded and improved it in his maturity. The verse of it, while singularly unequal in merit, often evinces Shakespeare's riper style, but the construction of it is wofully defective. In spiritual qual-

ity,—denoted by a certain serenity of mind and feeling,—it is kindred with “The Tempest” and “The Winter’s Tale,” which are credibly nominated the latest of Shakespeare’s unassisted compositions, and which belong to the years 1610 and 1611. “Cymbeline” was extant before 1610, but, apparently, not long before.

#### TIME AND PLACE OF THE ACTION.

The period of “Cymbeline” is about 25 B. C.,—the eve of the Christian era. The action of it alternates between Britain and Rome, but passes mostly in Britain,—which, anciently, included the countries now known as England, Scotland, and Wales. Information as to ancient Britain is derived chiefly from Cæsar’s “Commentaries,” the writings of the Greek geographer Strabo (who lived from about 54 B. C. to about 24 A. D.), and from Holinshed, who, in his “Chronicle Histories,” followed those authorities. The Celtic name of ancient Britain was Prydhain, from which, according to Camden, the Romans derived Britannica. Aristotle (384 B. C. to 322 B. C.) refers to Britain as Albion, or Ierne. Pliny intimates that the name Albion was that of *only one* of the British islands. The cliffs on the south coast of England are white (*albus*); hence, Albion. Herodotus (484 B. C.

to 408 B. C.) alludes to the British Isles as the "Cassiterides,"—"Tin Islands." The country now called Wales was not known by that name in the time of Cymbeline; the Romans called it *Britannica Secunda*. In the play *Imogen* calls it Wales, while *Posthumus*, writing, refers to it, and *Belarius* speaks of it, as *Cambria*.

## HISTORICAL COMMENT.

Cassibelan, mentioned in Act I., sc. 1, was the younger brother of Lud, King of Britain, whom he succeeded. After the death of Cassibelan, his nephew, Theomantius (called, also, Leonatus, and, in the play, Act I., sc. 1, styled Tenantius), youngest son of Lud, became king, 45 B. C., and he, in turn, was succeeded, 33 B. C., by his son Cymbeline, who reigned thirty-five years. The name Cymbeline, in old chronicles, is also written Cunobelinus. Holinshed states that Theomantius, coming to the throne of Britain, 45 B. C., reigned twenty-two years; in which case Cymbeline must have begun to reign 23 B. C., not 33. Cymbeline was friendly to the Roman Emperor Augustus, then regnant, and he was desirous that the youth of his kingdom should profit by Roman association and example.

The play begins in a garden (see scene 2, line 14) of *Cymbeline's* palace. The inhabitants of ancient



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Britain were ignorant of the art of gardening. The nearest approximation to "a garden" that *Cymbeline* could have possessed would have been a grove. The houses of his time and country were made of wood,—some of them being *founded* on stone,—and were circular, with high, tapering roofs. The country on the coast of Britain presented more evidences of civilization than were to be found in the interior,—such civilization having been derived from the Romans. Handsome and costly ornamentation of rooms in *Cymbeline's* palace is warranted for stage use,—aside from poetic license, which would be sufficient,—because the actual prince who bore that name had been reared at Rome, under the Emperor Augustus, and therefore was acquainted with luxury; and as there was commerce between Britain and both Rome and Greece, as well as Phoenicia, rich materials of many sorts must have been imported among the Britons.

The play designates "Lud's-Town" as *Cymbeline's* capital, and Lud's-Town, ancient London, accordingly, is the scene of its basic action. There, it must be supposed, the orphan *Posthumus* wooed and won his *Imogen*; there those lovers were privately married; there the furious *Cymbeline* uttered his irrational, cruel decree of banishment; there the depraved, imperious, subtle *Queen* wove her mur-

derous plot to poison her husband and her step-daughter and thus make clear for her son *Cloten* (offspring of her first marriage) the pathway to the throne; there the crafty, malignant, hateful *Iachimo* executed his vile treachery; and there the vulgar, conceited, foolish *Cloten* had his paltry career of idleness, sport, and bluster, and formed and nursed his odious scheme for *Imogen's* ruin. The actual capital of the historic Cymbeline, called Camulodumum, is thought to have been not London, which is in Middlesex County, but Colchester, a place in the contiguous county of Essex. Neither in this play, however, nor in any other is Shakespeare scrupulous as to historic accuracy. Mention occurs in "Cymbeline" of "and-irons" and a "chimney-piece,"—objects familiar in the poet's period, but unknown to the earlier times and persons supposed to be involved in the drama.

#### BASIS OF THE PLOT.

The fable of "Cymbeline" is founded partly on Italian fiction and partly on British history. It contravenes, however, to some extent, the only historical authority upon which a portion of the structure of its plot is reared. That authority was Holinshed's "Chronicle Histories," and Holinshed distinctly inti-

mates that Cymbeline was at liberty to pay a tribute to Rome, or not to pay it, and that Cymbeline, like his father, Theomantius, lived at peace with the Romans, and continually paid tribute to them. Shakespeare's introduction of a Roman army into England, for the purpose of coercing Cymbeline, in the matter of tribute,—an expedient that he found essential to the development of his story,—is, accordingly, a misrepresentation. The war of Rome against Britain to enforce payment of tribute occurred in the later reign of Guiderius, Cymbeline's eldest son. The point is not important, except that it justifies intimation that, since the dramatist was not careful to be historically accurate, the Stage is under no imperative obligation to be rigidly scrupulous as to accuracy.

Shakespeare found a few facts in Holinshed, which he twisted to suit his purpose, and the rest of his "history" he invented. An incident mentioned by Holinshed,—the defence of a lane, in Scotland, by a farmer named Hay and his two sons, who confronted a cohort of invading Danes and thus rallied their retreating countrymen and gained a victory,—is the basis of the passage in "Cymbeline," Act IV., sc. 1, in which *Belarius* and the *King's* sons, *Guiderius* and *Arviragus*, turn the tide of battle and save the day for the Britons, in conflict with the Romans.



The names of Guiderius and Arviragus are in Holinshed's "Chronicle," but the nefarious theft of those boys, in childhood, is a fable of Shakespeare's invention, and so is the whole posture of the royal household,—the author having found it convenient to designate *Cymbeline* as a widower with a grown daughter, *Imogen*, and to marry him to a widow with an adult son, *Cloten*. To Shakespeare's invention, also, is due the character of *Posthumus Leonatus*, with all of his trials, agonies, subterfuges, disguises, and wanderings; the private marriage of *Posthumus* and *Imogen*; the perfidious machinations of the *Queen* (a sort of antique Lucrezia Borgia) against those wedded lovers; the pursuit of *Imogen* by the detested and detestable *Cloten*; the contrasted characters of *Pisano* and *Belarius*; and all that appertains to the adventures, the apparent death, and the preservation of *Imogen*, in the mountains of Wales. For the offensive story of the wager between *Posthumus* and *Iachimo*, which is employed with much skill, Shakespeare was indebted in part to a tale in Boccaccio's "Decameron" (the Ninth Novel of the Second Day), partial translations of which, in English, had appeared in England as early as 1518, and in part to an English imitation of that tale, absurdly called "Westward for Smelts," published, according to Malone and Steevens, in 1603. Mention of those facts is spe-



cially pertinent because it should be considered that the dramatist, in several particulars, followed those narratives of a scandalous transaction in a literal manner,—a manner which is not always productive of the best results. It is to Boccaccio's "How IIII merchauntes met all togyther in on way, which were of IIII dyverse landes" that the play owes the absurd presence of a *Frenchman*, a *Dutchman*, and a *Spaniard* in *Philario's* house, in Rome,—two of them being dummies, and all of them being anachronistic and needless.

In Boccaccio's novel it is the husband who proposes the wager: in "Westward for Smelts" it is the libertine. In Boccaccio's story the rascal has no interview with the wife: in the "Smelts" he introduces himself to her, saying that her husband had asked him to do so. In the Italian tale the wily adventurer, *Ambroguilo*, bribes a female servant of *Zinerva*,—wife of *Bernardo Lomellin*, a merchant of Genoa,—to induce her mistress to receive and temporarily guard a large chest; and, having concealed himself in that receptacle, he is conveyed into the wife's chamber, where, in the night, he observes her, asleep, perceives a mole on her breast, and steals a ring and other trinkets belonging to her, to be used as proof that he has won the wager. In the English tale the knave hides under her bed. Shakespeare has taken

materials from those narratives and carelessly blended them. His finer instinct caused him to follow the example of the "Smelts," in making the libertine propose the wager, and, with his unerring perception of dramatic effect, he has, in the scene of *Imogen's* slumber and *Iachimo's* emergence from the chest,—in the sanctity of her chamber, in the loneliest, deadliest hour of the night,—devised a fabric of action and written a poetic passage of self-communion, at once terrible and beautiful, transcending praise: *Iachimo's* whispered speech is the perfection of "thinking aloud." It may have been perception of the opportunity of creating that effect which prompted the dramatist to choose the painful "Decameron" theme as a subject for a play. His management of his narrative, however, is, in general, bad; it ignores considerations of place, distance, and time; shifts the scene without heed to probability, or even possibility, introducing impracticable voyages by sea and journeys by land; confuses the ages of persons introduced,—specifically those of the *King*, the *Queen*, and *Cloten*; blurs the motives of some of the principal characters; and creates such a tangle of incidents that it is only by scrupulous circumspection that the play can be reduced to anything like order, and can be set and acted in a way to make its sequence of occurrences rational and clear.

Dr. Johnson's strictures on "Cymbeline" are entirely right:

"This play has many just sentiments, some natural dialogues, and some pleasing scenes, but they are obtained at the expense of much incongruity. To remark the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct, the confusion of the names and manners of different times, and the impossibility of the events in any system of life, were to waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for detection and too gross for aggravation."

Persons who are interested in contrasting intelligent criticism with critical trash and considering the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of which Shakespeare has been the helpless victim may well compare those simple, sensible words with the pronouncement, on the same subject, by Augustus William von Schlegel (1767-1845):

"He [Shakespeare] has here connected a novel of Boccaccio with traditionary tales of the ancient Britons, reaching back to the times of the first Roman Emperors; and he has contrived, *by the most gentle transitions* [! ! !], to blend together into *one harmonious whole* [! ! !] the social manners of *the latest times*, with heroic deeds, and even with the appearances, of the gods."

It has been surmised by Gollancz,—“Temple Shakespeare,” 1894-'96,—following K. Schenkl, that the dramatist was, to some extent, indebted to an old



nursery tale, called "Little Snow-White,"—latterly conveyed into English from a German source, but really ancient and, probably, current in England in the dramatist's time, and known to him in childhood. In that tale the heroine, *Snow-White*, is persecuted by a wicked stepmother, who deals in poisons,—prototype of *Cymbeline's* second wife,—and she takes refuge in a cave, with seven friendly dwarfs, and presently dies there. She is lovely in death, and the dwarfs, and also the birds, mourn over her, just as Shakespeare's wildwood princes mourn over the beautiful *Fidèle* when in deathlike trance.

## STATE OF THE TEXT.

The text of "Cymbeline" evinces unmistakable marks of having been subjected to gross ill-treatment. Its condition, indeed, is so defective that it has elicited from commentators a mass of Notes exceeding more than twice the bulk of the entire play. Furness became convinced, in his minute, scrupulous, loving study of this subject, that another hand than that of Shakespeare,—the hand of a far inferior dramatist, an "assistant" or an "interpolator,"—is visible in many of the scenes. The play as it has come to us contains much that,—by whomsoever written, whether Shakespeare or another,—can not



only advantageously be omitted from stage representation but could with profit to Shakespeare's reputation be totally obliterated. Extensive portions of it,—including the "Masque," which Steevens rightly designated "contemptible nonsense,"—are always cut when it is performed.

No quarto of "Cymbeline" was published. The play was printed for the first time in the Folio of 1623. It must, therefore, have been set in type from a manuscript prompt-book,—a part of the "copy" that was furnished to the press by Heminge and Condell, who authorized and, apparently, superintended,—though in a slipshod manner,—the preparation of that renowned book. Those editors say, in their prefatory "Address," referring to their deceased friend and fellow actor Shakespeare, "We have scarce received from him a blot in his papers"; a remark which implies that they had possessed his manuscripts, either the originals or (more probably) fair copies of them. Shakespeare is credibly supposed to have begun writing for the stage as early as 1588, and he certainly continued to write for it during the next twenty-four years, or longer. His first manuscripts, in constant use in the theatre, could not have lasted all that time, and probably they were more or less replaced by copies. He had been dead nearly seven years when his old friends brought out

their Folio collection of his plays. It cannot reasonably be doubted that his "papers," even though originally received by them "with scarce a blot," must have become, in some instances, much mangled. The First Folio, though it be the most precious volume in our language, will, I believe, nevertheless remain to the end of time an unequalled monument of bad book-making, whatever be the reasons for the fact. Dr. Johnson, whose commentary on Shakespearean matters is frequently refreshing by reason of its freedom from ebullient nonsense, instructively remarks that

"His works were transcribed for the players by those who may be supposed to have seldom understood them; they were transmitted by copyers equally unskilful, who still multiplied errors; they were, perhaps, mutilated by the actors, for the sake of shortening the speeches" [or, the Doctor might have added, for the sake of lengthening them!] "and were at last printed without correction of the press."

"Cymbeline" could, of course, be acted in literal accordance with the Folio text; but, if it were so acted, the performance would be intolerably prolix and the effect of it would be disgusting at some points and lethargic at all: no modern audience would remain through such a dreary, exhausting ordeal. The play must be cut for use on our stage. The colloquies

relative to the wager should not be spoken precisely as they are written, because they could not be so spoken without giving offence to decency. The theme is noxious and so is some of the language, while the story is complex and the treatment of it exceedingly diffuse.

#### CONSTITUENTS, AND CLASSIFICATION, OF THE DRAMA.

The power possessed by Shakespeare of transmuting the lead of prose into the gold of poetry is well exemplified in portions of "Cymbeline." Although the pivotal incident, the wager, is indelicate and offensive, the spirit of the play is lovely and sympathetic. No reasoning could absolutely justify the conduct of *Posthumus*, a person who is heralded and extolled as a gentleman beyond compare, in condescending to participate in such an odious transaction, or in tolerating even the mention of the subject. There are some things which a self-respecting man does not permit. Still, without the wager, there could be no play, and the character of *Posthumus* is so ingeniously drawn as to make his conduct seem venial, if not natural, in the circumstances in which he is placed. He is depicted as melancholy, thoughtful, and introspective. In his afflicting banishment from his young wife, *Imogen*, whom he tenderly and



entirely loves, he becomes morbid, visionary, splenetic, and rash. The supercilious tone and airy, ironical insolence of the wily *Iachimo*,—insolence thinly veiled under a specious pretence of urbane courtesy,—exasperates him, but his first emotion of impetuous anger partially subsides into contempt, and in the ensuing state of mental tumult, partly resentment, partly derision, he agrees to the wager. Later, when the paltry, yet beguiling, ingenuity of *Iachimo* has convinced him of *Imogen's* perfidy, his anger works on him like madness, and so he dispatches to *Pisanio*,—noble type of fidelity!—the horrible command for the murder of his unsuspecting, loving wife.

The action and interest of the play depend almost exclusively on *Iachimo's* rascally stratagem and *Imogen's* adventure and experience among the Welsh mountains. Around the sinister night scene in the chamber of the sleeping *Imogen*,—angelic always, but more than ever angelic in her repose,—there is a horror of impending evil and an absorbing atmosphere of breathless suspense. The delicious tone of healthful, joyous freedom which permeates the scenes of alternate adventure and primitive ease among the wild, breezy mountains of Wales is not anywhere excelled in Shakespeare's plays, unless it be by the enchanting spirit of the lovely rural episode of *Florizel* and *Perdita*, in "The Winter's Tale." In



the beautiful character of *Imogen*, in the picturesque, open-air scenes of simple, natural, vigorous, happy life; in the exposition of an ultimate triumph of good over evil,—a triumph superinduced without the turgid weight of didacticism; in the gems of wisdom and of poetry with which the text is sometimes adorned, and in the propulsive drift of the play, steadily setting toward love, charity, patience, and gentleness, the spirit of Shakespeare seems to stand revealed. That magnanimous spirit particularly shows itself in the attempted (though not successful) rehabilitation of the depraved *Iachimo*,—who is a compound of meanness, duplicity, vile cynicism, and wanton wickedness, associated with strong will and intellectual faculty. That villain, however, is made to suffer remorse, and is at last constrained to repentance and to abject confession of his crime. The drama makes no display of evil merely for evil's sake, while there is enough in it of evil to illustrate and embellish good; and, at the close, "Pardon's the word for all!"

"*Cymbeline*" is usually placed among the Tragedies of Shakespeare,—probably because one of its principal persons, *Cloten*, is killed, in combat, by *Guiderius* (*Polydore*), while another of its principal persons, the *Queen*, as darkly intimated in Act V., sc. 5, commits suicide; and, furthermore, because

its action includes a sanguinary episode of war. Coleridge suitably classified it, with "Pericles," "The Tempest," and "The Winter's Tale," under the descriptive designation of "Romances." The purpose of the play, in as far as it reveals any definite purpose, is to depict and extol a lofty, beautiful ideal of chastity and fidelity in woman. *Imogen* is the central character,—an image of pure, deep, passionate, righteous love, inspiring, dominating, and sustaining a radically noble person, the most essentially feminine and the loveliest of all the women whom Shakespeare has portrayed. The frequent and abrupt shifting of the scene so completely dislocates continuity of movement that an exact computation of the time occupied by the action is practically impossible. Story, character, incident, picture, movement, and dramatic effect, however, are provided, and, by means of condensation and suitable change, a measurably smooth representation of the play could be made possible. The various performances of it which I have seen have been more or less confused, irregular, and rough.

#### EARLIEST RECORDED PERFORMANCES.

The stage history of "Cymbeline" begins with Forman's record of the performance of it which he saw, at the Globe Theatre, in 1610 or 1611.

## 58 SHAKESPEARE ON THE STAGE

The names of the principal actors who participated in the representation of all the plays of Shakespeare which are comprised in the First Folio are these, as spelled in the list prefixed to that volume:

William Shakespeare (1564-1616).	Samuel Gilburne (———).
Richard Burbadge (1568?-1619).	Robert Armin (———).
John Hemmings (1555-1630).	William Ostler (———).
Augustine Phillips (15——1605).	Nathan Field (1587-1633).
William Kempt (———).	John Underwood (———1624).
Thomas Poope (15——1604).	Nicholas Tooley (———1623).
George Bryan (———).	William Ecclestone (———).
Henry Condell (15——1627).	Joseph Taylor (1583-1653).
William Slye (15——1612).	Robert Benfield (———).
Richard Cowly (15——1620).	Robert Goughe (———).
John Lowin (1572-1654).	Richard Robinson (———1647).
Samuel Crosse (———).	John Shancke (———1646).
Alexander Cooke (15——1614).	John Rice (———).

The cast of parts with which "Cymbeline" was first acted has not been ascertained. All the actors above mentioned, except Cross, Gilburne, Phillips, and Pope, were living in 1610-'11. It is probable that



*Posthumus* was acted by either Burbage or Taylor; *Iachimo* by either Taylor, Condell, or Ostler; *Cymbeline* by Lowin or Bryan; and *Belarius* by Underwood: this I surmise, considering their respective lines of business, as indicated by the character of other parts which they are known to have played. Gough, Cooke, Robinson, Field, and Tooley acted females,—not exclusively, but customarily,—and Cooke was accounted specially expert in simulating the woman. Perhaps he was the first representative of *Imogen*.

The next recorded presentment of “Cymbeline” was a revival, twenty-two years later, when the play was acted, at Whitehall, before King Charles the First. Sir Henry Herbert (1595-1673), Master of the Revels (he was appointed such by King Charles in 1625, and he held the office till his death), recorded that performance as follows:

“On Wednesday night, the first of January, 1633, ‘Cymbeline’ was acted at Court, by the King’s Players. Well liked by the King.”

The players, on that occasion, were members of the King’s Company, “His Majesty’s Servants,” described as “men of grave and sober behavior,” who were associated with the Blackfriars Theatre, and also with the Globe Theatre: they acted at the



former house in winter, and at the latter in summer. Among the actors known to have been members of the King's Company at that time were Joseph Taylor, John Lowin, Eliard Swanston, Thomas Pollard, John Shancke, Richard Robinson, and Stephen Hammerton, all of whom may have participated in the performance of "Cymbeline" which was "well liked" by King Charles. Hammerton is mentioned as "a beautiful woman actor." No recorded revival of "Cymbeline" later than that of 1633 was effected in King Charles's reign. In 1642, and again, more stringently, on February 11, 1647, all the playhouses, players, and plays were forbidden by Act of Parliament. No record of this drama occurs until after the reopening of the London theatres,—which was one of the earliest incidents of the Restoration, and which began in 1659.

#### SUBSEQUENT REPRESENTATIONS.—ALTERATIONS OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY.

An alteration of "Cymbeline" was made by that vivacious Court butterfly "Tom" D'Urfey (1653-1723), under the title of "The Injured Princess, or the Fatal Wager," and it was produced by Davenant, at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, in 1682, and was printed in the same year. No record of the cast has

survived. The theatrical chronicles of that period are sparse and somewhat indefinite.

On the eve of the Restoration of King Charles the Second a bookseller named John Rhodes obtained (1659) a License to give dramatic performances in London, and organized a company for that purpose. Among the members of it were Thomas Betterton, Thomas Sheppy, Thomas Lovel, Thomas Lilliston, Cave Underhill, Robert Turner, ——— Dixon, Robert Nokes, Edward Kynaston, James Nokes, ——— Angel, William Betterton, John Mosley, and ——— Floid (Downes). That company acted in the theatre variously named but best known as Dorset Garden, and it existed for about two years. In 1660, King Charles having been crowned, Thomas Killigrew (1612-1682) and Sir William Davenant (1606-1688) each obtained a Patent,—that is, an open grant from the Government,—to establish a theatre, and two dramatic companies were thereupon formed; one of them, called the King's Company, directed by Killigrew, the other, called the Duke of York's Company, directed by Davenant. The former presently became established at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane; the latter at a new theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The players whom Rhodes had assembled were soon absorbed into one or other of those organizations,

between which, till nearly the end of King Charles's reign (1685), there existed an active rivalry; but upon the death of Killigrew, which befell March 19, 1682, the situation underwent a gradual change, the two companies were united, and thereafter they acted, under the management of Davenant, at Drury Lane, beginning on November 16, that year. Most of the names of the players who were extant when the two competitive companies were formed, in 1660, can be gathered from Downes and other old recorders, but several of the old performers had died, or had retired, before the occurrence of the Union (1682), recruits had been engaged, and therefore a full, authentic list of Davenant's actors, in that year, cannot be provided. Among them, at that date, or a little latter, were Thomas Betterton, Edward Kynaston, Michael Mohun, William Cartwright, Captain Griffin, Cardell Goodman, ——— Powell (father of George Powell), Thomas Jevon, George Wiltshire, Cave Underhill, Samuel Sandford, Duke Weston, William Mountfort, ——— Gillow, James Carlisle, ——— Perin, ——— Percival, ——— Bright, Mrs. ——— Corey, Mrs. ——— Cooke, Mrs. Elizabeth Barry, Mrs. Bowtell, and Lady Slingsby. It was by members of this company that D'Urfey's alteration of "Cymbeline" was first acted. The adapter called his work a Comedy, and stated that



it was written "nine years before,"—that is, in 1673.

The Edward Kynaston above mentioned gained special distinction by his magnificent performance of *King Henry the Fourth*, but he had begun as an impersonator of women. The gay and garrulous Samuel Pepys wrote of him that he was "the loveliest lady that ever I saw in my life." It should be remembered that in Shakespeare's time (except for ineffectual attempts to introduce them, made by a French company, at the Blackfriars, November 7; at the Red Bull, November 29; at the Fortune, December 14, 1629) women had not appeared on the British Stage: *all* female characters were assumed by boys or young men. Women had acted in Italy and in France, but for England the woman actor was not permitted till after the Restoration. Davenant, who had lived in France, and who liked the French way of doing things, not only introduced luxuriant scenery to the English Theatre, but actively favored the introduction of female players. Their advent was certainly imperative. The idea of a man as *Miranda*, *Imogen*, *Juliet*, *Perdita*, *Hermione*, *Desdemona*, etc., is repellent. Margaret Hughes (died, 1719), acting *Desdemona*, December 8, 1660, at Drury Lane, was the *first English actress* to appear on the English Stage. In passing, it should be mentioned that the



prefix "Mrs." did not, in the Restoration period, necessarily signify a married woman. The prefix "Miss" was used only to designate "a woman of pleasure," and not till the beginning of the eighteenth century did usage redeem it from opprobrium.

D'Urfey,—of whom Addison said "there could not be a more cheerful, honest, good-natured man,"—was an inventive dramatist, but a coarse, trivial writer. His version retains parts of Shakespeare's text, but alters it and makes additions to it. The plot, disjointed in the original, becomes more perplexed in his arrangement of it, and the names of several of the characters are needlessly changed. *Posthumus Leonatus* is styled *Ursaces*; *Iachimo*, converted into a Frenchman, figures as *Shatillion*; *Imogen* is called *Eugenia*; *Guiderius* and *Arviragus* are transposed; *Arviragus*, speaking the words of *Guiderius*, is named *Polladour*, while the speeches allotted, in the original, to *Arviragus* are spoken by *Guiderius*. *Pisanio* kills *Shatillion* (*Iachimo*): the fabric is a conspicuous example of senseless meddling and "confusion worse confounded."

<D'Urfey's patchwork was exhibited at Lincoln's Inn Fields, January 7, 1720, with a cast which included several actors of commended ability, among them being Lacy Ryan as *Ursaces*, Anthony Boheme as *Pisanio*, John Leigh as *Cymbeline*, Smith

(not the brilliant William Smith, who came later) as *Arviragus*, Christopher Bullock as *Shatillion*, Mrs. C. Bullock as *Eugenia*, and Mrs. Giffard as the *Queen*. ~~A~~ presentment of this play, March 20, 1738, at Covent Garden, was effected with a better cast, of which these were the principal features: *Cymbeline*, Lacy Ryan; *Ursaces*, Dennis Delane; *Shatillion*, Thomas Walker; *Pisanio*, ——— Bridge-water; *Cloten*, Thomas Chapman; *Arviragus*, Adam Hallam; *Eugenia*, Mrs. Templar; *Queen*, Anne Hallam. > The Hallams mentioned in this list were progenitors of the William and Lewis Hallam who, in 1750-'52, were so largely instrumental in establishing the Theatre in America.

Charles Marsh, a London bookseller, who became a lawyer and magistrate, made a version of "Cymbeline," which was published in 1755, but it was never acted. C. Marsh published also a version of "The Winter's Tale," and he made one of "Romeo and Juliet," which was not given to the press. Mention of this writer is coupled with ironical compliment to his respectable dulness.

< An alteration, made by William Hawkins (died, 1801), Professor of Poetry at Oxford University, was published in 1759. That fabric of misdirected industry places the scene partly at a royal castle and partly in a forest in Wales. Other changes were

made, all equally capricious and abortive. The *Queen* is omitted, being mentioned as "lately dead." The name of *Pisanio* is changed to *Philario*, that of *Guiderius* to *Palador*, and that of *Arviragus* to *Cadwal*. The first appearance of *Posthumus* is delayed till the Third Act. *Iachimo* is excised. The text is encumbered with additions. This distortion was six times performed, at Covent Garden, in 1759, and it was a failure. The cast comprised William Smith as *Palador*, David Ross as *Posthumus*, Mrs. Vincent as *Imogen*, and Thomas Lowe, who sang the Dirge,—  
 "Fear no more the heat o' the sun,"—as *Cadwal*.  
 "Lowe, I understood, had once a very fine voice, but no musical science. . . . His name is to be found in all the old song-books of Vauxhall and Marylebone Gardens" (John Taylor). He died, in penury, March 2, 1783.

A version made by Henry Brooke (1703-1783),—a voluminous Irish author, supposed to have been an extreme radical in politics and somewhat harshly treated for that reason,—was published in 1778, but was not acted. Brooke's novel, "The Fool of Quality," is still sometimes read, by antiquarians. He wrote fourteen plays, one of which was an alteration of "Antony and Cleopatra." He was celebrated in verse by a bard named Paul Whitehead, who rhythmically stated that he had snatched the never-fading



laurel from the tomb of Shakespeare. However that may be, he certainly succeeded in snatching away whatever of congruity exists in the original of his "Cymbeline." Mention of a few of the changes that he made is sufficiently indicative of his meddlesome method. All that relates to *Imogen* as *Fidèle* is omitted. *Guiderius* and *Arviragus* are excluded. The character of *Posthumus* is ineffectively enlarged. *Belarius* figures as a belligerent hermit, and as such he fights with *Cloten* and kills him. The *Queen*, on hearing of *Cloten's* death, runs mad, swallows poison, and expires. *Iachimo* is called *Clodio*, and he is killed, in combat, by *Posthumus*. The text, likewise, is considerably altered.

Ambrose Eccles (died, 1809) edited an alteration of "Cymbeline," which was published in 1793, but which never found its way to the stage. Eccles appears to have been a reverent editor. He believed, correctly, that Shakespeare's plays had been left by the author in a disorderly condition, which the compilers of the Folio had neglected to repair, and he deemed that a transposition of some of the scenes in "Cymbeline" would improve it for use on the stage. That transposition he effected, and what he did for "Cymbeline" he also did for "King Lear" (1793) and for "The Merchant of Venice" (1805). Each of those three plays was published in a separate vol-

ume, with critical and historical notes. It would be well if all manipulators of Shakespeare's plays were as conscientious and judicious as Eccles was.

#### THEOPHILUS CIBBER'S REVIVAL.

In the autumn of 1744 Theophilus Cibber (1703-1758), the profligate, disreputable, clever son of Colley Cibber, was, for a short time, manager of the Haymarket Theatre, London, which he opened with "Romeo and Juliet," and on November 8,—according to the "Autobiography" of his sister Charlotte, the unfortunate Mrs. Richard Charke, an authority credited, in this instance, by the careful Genest,—he revived "Cymbeline" and acted *Posthumus*. His daughter, Jane, was the leading woman of his company. She had played *Juliet*, with him as *Romeo*, and, probably, she played *Imogen*. She is described as "agreeable and elegant" but tame, and as not possessed of a good voice. One old chronicle states that Theophilus Cibber's person was "disagreeable, his face disgusting, and his voice shrill," but adds that "he gave proofs of genius, and attained a considerable degree of public favor." If correctly described, he could not have looked like *Posthumus*. He is credited with vivacity and effrontery. He wrote and published eight plays,—two of which, "Romeo and

Juliet" and "King Henry VI.," were alterations of plays by Shakespeare. < In producing "Cymbeline" he used the original text,—probably somewhat cut,—but no special account of the presentation exists. > He perished in a shipwreck, on the coast of Scotland, in October, 1758.

CHARACTER OF *POSTHUMUS LEONATUS*.

*Posthumus Leonatus* is a much modified variant of *Leontes*, in "The Winter's Tale," and yet he is less a prototype of a jealous *Leontes* than he is a jealous *Hamlet*,—if such a character were possible. The text defines him as a supremely excellent and incomparable person; a scholar; a thinker; an example to the young; a guide to the old; a man possessed of every virtue and every accomplishment. He is indicated as noble in nature, handsome in person, dignified in bearing, graceful in movement, having also the attributes of intrinsic power and authority. His countenance should be pale, thoughtful, frank, and earnest in expression. He is to be regarded as manly, resolute, self-contained, but capable of passionate feeling and fiery utterance. He should be tall and dark. His age is about twenty-four. He is a brave soldier, and, incidentally, a fine swordsman.

It must be observed by the student of *Posthumus*



that the wager, made in Rome, as to his absent wife's chastity is supplementary to an earlier dispute, on the same subject, that has occurred in Orleans on his journey through France: and that after his mind has been poisoned by the insidious, skilfully told, cumulative lies of *Iachimo* his proceedings toward his wife, tending to have her treacherously lured into a secret place and there killed, are atrociously cruel and wicked, and are such as can be palliated only on the score of insanity. *Iachimo*, in his testamentary confession, at the close, declares, indeed, that such apparent proofs of *Imogen's* infidelity were presented by him to her husband as sufficed "to make the noble Leonatus mad." On that ground only can the conduct of *Posthumus* be explained (regarding the man's character in the light in which the dramatist requires that we should regard it), and, even in part, forgiven. To me *Posthumus* is detestable,—and it requires sophistry of an active order to make him seem sympathetic.

For stage purposes the part of *Posthumus* is complex and difficult. It requires varied and almost contradictory attributes; it necessitates exceptional exertion, precision, and care; it affords, indeed, opportunities for the display of histrionic capacity and for the creation of powerful emotional effects, but they are much inferior to the opportunities afforded by

many other leading parts in Shakespearean and legitimate drama. *Posthumus* is sporadic,—appearing only at long intervals, and when on the scene (except in passages that are superfluous and, at least on the modern stage, much curtailed or expunged entirely) he remains visible but a few moments at a time, so that the representative of him must make repeated beginnings. There is no continuity, and, consequently, no cumulative effect. The character is unsympathetic to discriminative observation, and its importance on the stage has, in my judgment, been much overvalued.

LATER PRESENTMENTS: VARIOUS PERFORMERS OF *POSTHUMUS*.—BRITISH STAGE: RYAN.—GARRICK.—POWELL.—REDDISH.—BANNISTER.—HENDERSON.

⟨A presentment of “Cymbeline,” in its original form, was made, April 7, 1746, at Covent Garden, with Lacy Ryan as *Posthumus* and Mrs. Hannah Pritchard as *Imogen*. The brilliant Henry Woodward was in the cast, as *Guiderius*, and so was Beard, a fine singer, as *Arviragus*. Ryan figures in⟩ old records as a useful actor, whether in comedy or tragedy. He played more than a hundred parts, of record, and many that are unnamed. He was specially admired as *Cassius*, *Edgar*, and *Macduff*. His person was slight, his voice strong but harsh.

His face had been disfigured by a blow, received in youth, and later by a pistol-shot. He could not have resembled the handsome *Posthumus*. John Beard (1716-1791) was a good actor as well as a singer: also he was a worthy and interesting person and was highly respected. He died at Hampton, Middlesex, and was there buried. His epitaph, composed by Isaac Hull, who founded the Theatrical Fund, contains this couplet:

“Through life his morals and his music ran  
In symphony and spoke the virtuous man.”

Beard's merit as *Arviragus* was his singing of the Dirge. No record is found of Woodward's acting as *Guiderius*. It probably was indifferent, for he was essentially a vivacious comedian, and it is written of him that he never could speak a serious line with propriety.

David Garrick made a version of “Cymbeline” and produced it at Drury Lane, in March, 1761 (Murphy), himself acting *Posthumus*. His performance did not inspire much interest. “The Dramatic Censor,” indeed, declared that Garrick's “astonishing talents were never more happily exercised than in *Posthumus*”; but that verdict, obviously, was unsound, because we know that, in tragedy, his per-



formances of *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *King Richard the Third*, and *Hamlet* were superior to any others that he gave. His *Posthumus* is not even mentioned by Murphy, and it is mentioned only in an Index by Davies,—his contemporary, admiring, and most authentic biographers. Genest gives November 28 (not March), 1761, as the date of the production. The revival was inconsequent, and Garrick did not retain *Posthumus* in his repertory, though his career was continued during the next fifteen years: he retired June 10, 1776, and had acted 93 parts, of record. His version of "Cymbeline" condenses the original play by means of omission, and amends it by transpositions, these being deftly made with a view to that celerity of movement and sharpness of effect which the experienced actor naturally, and rightly, values. A singular imperfection of it is the discardance of the essential soliloquy of *Cornelius*, the Doctor, Act I., sc. 6, concerning the narcotic he has given to the *Queen*, which she, supposing it to be a deadly poison, gives to *Pisanio*, telling him that it is a sovereign remedy, and which, innocently given by him to *Imogen*, causes her deathlike trance. That passage was retained in the printed copy (1761) of Garrick's version, but it was not spoken in the representation, and the absence of it must have tended to mystify the audience,—a radical error

in dramatic art. The cast with which the play was produced comprised Charles Holland as *Iachimo*, Thomas Davies as *Cymbeline*, Packer as *Pisanio*, Thomas King as *Cloten*, Burton as *Belarius*, William O'Brien as *Guiderius*, John Palmer as *Arviragus*, and Miss Bride as *Imogen*. The fine person, melodious voice, and earnest, zealous spirit of Holland, Garrick's pupil and follower, would have made him effective as *Iachimo*. Palmer,—in after years so highly distinguished,—was then a youth of sixteen. Davies, the bookseller, Dr. Johnson's friend, was a conscientious, trustworthy actor, of the conventional kind. O'Brien, exceptionally clever and showy, was specially esteemed as a brilliant performer of dashing Irishmen: he is praised for "ease, spirit, and elegance of manners." Packer and Burton were "utility" players. The superb talents of King, then aged thirty-one and in his prime, probably were misspent as *Cloten*. Sixteen years later he was the first, and, according to tradition, the best, performer of *Sir Peter Teazle*.

William Powell (1736-1769) personated *Posthumus* in a representation of "Cymbeline" (Garrick's version) given at Covent Garden, December 28, 1767. Powell's chief excellence consisted in the use of pathos. A singular allusion to this fine actor occurs in one of the letters of Laurence Sterne, addressed



*From a Rare Old Print*

*Collection of David Belasco, Esq.*

**SAMUEL REDDISH AS POSTHUMUS**

*"But Imogen is your own, do your blest wills,  
And make me bless'd t' obey!"*

**ACT V., SC. 1**





(April 6, 1765) to Garrick: "Powell! Good Heaven! Give me some one with less smoke and more fire. There are some who, like the Pharisees, still think they should be heard for *much* speaking." That is a sample of a kind of "criticism" which, proceeding from supposedly authoritative and certainly influential sources, does much harm to reputation. William Powell was, by general, certainly by considerable, contemporary opinion, esteemed second only to Garrick and Barry, among the tragic actors of his period. He played many parts, ranging from *Jaffier* to *Orestes*; his pathetic old men were specially admirable; he excelled as *King Henry the Fourth*. His performance of *Posthumus* is recorded as "affecting and natural, but not capital." Among his associates in the cast of "Cymbeline" were William Smith as *Iachimo*, Yates as *Cloten*, Clarke as *Belarius*, and Mrs. Yates as *Imogen*.

〈 In a presentment of "Cymbeline" (Garrick's version) effected at Drury Lane, December 1, 1770, Samuel Reddish acted *Posthumus*, giving a performance that was deemed excellent.〉 In several old theatrical records that actor's *Posthumus* is mentioned as exceptionally fine, but his acting of the part is nowhere so minutely described that the reader can obtain a definite image of it. He seems to have possessed a winning personality. He was handsome, he

moved easily, and he spoke well. His face habitually wore a smile and it was not capable of much variety of expression. There was a pleasing animation in his general deportment, but in scenes of passionate feeling he was inefficient. His career on the London Stage extended from 1767 to 1779, in the course of which time he played eighty parts, of record, in all sorts of plays. On one occasion, at Covent Garden, when he was performing as *Hamlet*, the player (Whitfield) of *Laertes*, in the Fencing Scene, made an awkward lunge with his rapier, which removed the *Prince's* wig, showing him to be bald. The mortification of Reddish at this occurrence was so afflicting that, according to his friend John Taylor, it eventually caused mental derangement. He acted several other parts in Shakespeare, among them *Romeo*, *Shylock*, *King Henry the Sixth*, *Antonio*, *Macduff*, and *Edgar*. His *Edgar* was ranked next to his *Posthumus*. In 1774 he wedded Mrs. Canning, widow of George Canning and mother of the renowned statesman, George Canning, once (1822) Prime Minister of England. That lady, whose maiden name was Mary Annie Costello, when left in widowhood and poverty, went on the stage, making her first appearance, as *Jane Shore*, November 6, 1773, at Drury Lane, where her acquaintance with the actor began. < Reddish made his last conspicuous



appearance May 5, 1779, at Covent Garden, as *Posthumus*. His mind had become diseased. On that occasion he fancied that he was to play *Romeo*, and he said that in the Balcony Scene he would astonish everybody. He was with difficulty made to understand what part he was to play, but when at last he did understand he acted *Posthumus* "with a burst of inspiration and talent such as he had not shown even in his best days." After that time he collapsed and became a wreck. He died in a lunatic asylum at York, in December, 1785. Among the early actors of *Posthumus* he seems to have been the most sympathetic, persuasive, and credible.

It is interesting, in the light of the commendation bestowed on Reddish as the virtuous, exemplary *Posthumus*, to consider that the actor was declared, by that experienced and judicious observer John Bernard, "the greatest genius for the villains of the stage that the theatre ever possessed." Bernard wrote:

"I have seen other actors equal to him [Reddish] in particular characters, but none that exhibited, in this peculiar department, his general excellence. Cooke in the satiric and jovial villain; Macklin in the ferocious and revengeful; Mossop in the haughty and dignified; Palmer in the specious and insinuating; and Henderson in the reasoning and theorizing, were equally admirable: but Reddish had conception and power to embody them all."

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Men and women essentially and exceptionally amiable have shown, on the stage, a really marvellous capability of impersonating monsters of wickedness. Dunlap says of the kindly Fennell: "His villains appeared very natural. Deceit seemed to be at home in all his words and actions." The good Marie Wilkins was horribly perfect as the atrocious *Mother Frochard*, in "The Two Orphans." The gentle, pensive, considerate, noble Edwin Booth was the best *Iago* that appeared in our time.

In early life John Bannister's ambition was to act in tragedy, but experience taught him that his province was comedy. He seems to have been one of the most delightful comedians that ever lived. At the age of twenty-two he is found,—August 9, 1782, at the Haymarket Theatre,—playing *Posthumus*, a part for which he could not have been suited. Leigh Hunt, who carefully studied his acting, dwells particularly on his joviality, his heartiness, his unapproachable excellence in expressing ludicrous distress, adding, significantly: "He can divest himself entirely of his mirth, and, though he assumes nothing of the dignity of tragedy, can express the homelier feelings with a strongly continued effect." His best part was *Walter*, in "The Children in the Wood." He was on the stage for forty-three years,—from 1772 till 1815. His repertory, much diversified, comprised

228 parts. It is difficult to believe that Bannister could have been particularly effective as *Posthumus*, who certainly requires "the dignity of tragedy," whose anguish is frenzied, and whose expression of that anguish is tragic and wild. (Bannister's notable associates in "Cymbeline" were John Palmer as *Iachimo*, John Edwin as *Cloten*, and Mrs. Bulkley as *Imogen*.)

(John Henderson (1747-1785) acted *Posthumus* for the first time in a production of "Cymbeline" which was effected at Covent Garden, October 18, 1784. The weight of recorded critical opinion of this actor inclines to place him in the first rank, naming him, however, as greater in comedy than in tragedy.) His supreme success was gained in *Shylock*, *Iago*, *Sir Giles Overreach*, and *Sir John Falstaff*,—the latter in "King Henry IV.," where the true *Falstaff* occurs. Opinion about his acting was much divided in his time, for the reason that he openly rivalled Garrick, and the enthusiasts of that great actor resented his audacity.

Henderson worshipped Shakespeare, and the student of his professional career is assured that in the delivery of the soliloquies in Shakespeare's plays he had no equal among his contemporaries. His elocution was excellent, his taste fine; he possessed learning and many accomplishments. His faculty of imitation



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was extraordinary. He surmounted much physical disadvantage. His stature was low. His countenance somewhat lacked flexibility. His voice was not melodious. His limbs were ill proportioned. He could not dance, and his deportment lacked grace. He, nevertheless, could impersonate many entirely opposite characters, and he could electrify an audience and absorb its attention.

Boaden records that Kemble said to him: "Henderson's *Shylock* was the greatest effort I ever witnessed on the stage." The American theatrical manager and dramatist William Dunlap, who was in London, as a visitor, from 1784 to 1786, and saw him act, says that Henderson's *Posthumus* was "remembered as being perfection." He was manly, ingratiating, and effective in the earlier scenes, and passionate and pathetic in the emotional outburst at the close.

Henderson's chief associates in the production (1784) at Covent Garden were Richard Wroughton as *Iachimo*, Thomas Hull as *Pisanio*, John Quick as *Cloten*, Clark as *Belarius*, and Miss Young (who, later, became Mrs. Alexander Pope) as *Imogen*.

### JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE.

John Philip Kemble's alteration of "Cymbeline" was first produced, November 21, 1785, at Drury

Lane, and he made several subsequent revivals of the play, acting *Posthumus*, a part which he liked, in which he was admired, and which he kept in his repertory for thirty years. Boaden's commendation of the performance is emphatic: "Kemble was, by a thousand degrees, the best *Posthumus* of my time. It was a learned, judicious, and in the fine burst upon *Iachimo*, at the close, a most powerful effort; and such it continued through his theatrical life." Here the reader again feels a lack of particular specification of the actor's ideal and method. Mention, however, is made of that "admirable skill which kept the utmost vehemence from the remotest appearance of rant." Kemble's voice, says Boaden, "though not what could be considered powerful, was exquisitely modulated through its whole compass; it never was for a moment harsh or out of scale." Among Kemble's professional associates in that revival were Smith as *Iachimo*, Packer as *Pisanio*, Dodd (the prince of *Beaus*) as *Cloten*, Aicken as *Belarius*, Mrs. Hopkins as the *Queen*, and Mrs. Jordan as *Imogen*. On January 29, 1787, Kemble again presented "Cymbeline," at Drury Lane, and his sister, Mrs. Siddons, impersonated *Imogen*, for the first time. Later presentments of this play were made by Kemble, at Covent Garden, in 1806, 1812, and 1816. On the first of those occasions George Frederick Cooke gave

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his sinister, serpent-like, terrible impersonation of *Iachimo*. In Kemble's other revivals that reptile part was assumed, with silvery speciousness, by the classical, polished Young. Kemble's version was published in 1801, "as acted at Drury Lane," and in 1810, "as acted at Covent Garden." >

OTHER PLAYERS OF *POSTHUMUS*.—BRITISH STAGE: HOLMAN.—EDMUND KEAN.—THE ELDER BOOTH.—CHARLES KEMBLE.—YOUNG.

Joseph George Holman (1764-1817) played *Posthumus* in his first season on the stage (1784-'85), at Covent Garden. He was then a youth of twenty, and had begun with a capital performance of *Romeo*. This actor possessed uncommon advantages of person, talent, and education. His acting was remarkable for elegance of style and for animation, sensibility, and grace. He is mentioned as having been, to some extent, an imitator of Kemble, and, also, as having been prone to mar his art by affectation of singularity. There is no specific account of his *Posthumus*, but as he acted about a hundred variously important parts, and was considered excellent in most of them, and specifically so in the characters of *Hamlet*, *Chamont*, and *Jaffier*, which are, to some extent, emotionally kindred with *Posthumus*, its merit can reasonably be inferred.



In a presentment of "Cymbeline" made January 22, 1823, at Drury Lane, Edmund Kean acted *Posthumus* in association with Charles Mayne Young as *Iachimo*. Kean was generally thought to have overshadowed Young—which, no doubt, he did, as, at his best, he was the greater actor, and, by reason of the strange, wild quality of his genius, the more interesting. His supreme effects were wrought in the scene of the wager,—which he dominated with cool dignity and graceful self-repression,—and in that of the return of *Iachimo* and the making of his monstrous defamation of *Imogen*. In the latter Kean seems to have created a profound and pathetic effect by gradual, reluctant, painful transition from a state of perfect confidence in his adored wife and of cold menace toward *Iachimo* to one of deliriously passionate grief culminating in despair. It is asserted by one of his biographers that he "appears to have been the finest *Posthumus* that ever trod the stage,"—but no detailed examination of the performance and no reason for the opinion accompanies that verdict. Kean did not play the part after his engagement with Young.

Junius Brutus Booth, the Elder ("Old Booth"), acted *Posthumus*, in a production of "Cymbeline" which was made at Covent Garden, March 15, 1817. The Covent Garden play-bill of March 17 contained

the statement that "Mr. Booth in the part of *Posthumus* made an impression never exceeded by any actor's first appearance in one of Shakespeare's plays." He never acted *Posthumus* on the American Stage. About 1837 he performed *Iachimo* at the Tremont Theatre, Boston: no description of that performance has been found.

Charles Kemble (1775-1854) assumed *Posthumus* for the first time, October 28, 1820, at Covent Garden,—the beautiful and "fascinating" Maria Foote, afterward (1831) Countess of Harrington, being the *Imogen*. Macready, who was associated with him in the performance, wrote of him (1840) that he was "only a second-rate performer, and never in any esteem beyond that grade, in his best days." Macready's splenetic temper and censorious disposition are painfully manifested in his "Diaries," which, nevertheless, are of great value, as containing much trustworthy information and also much truth of a kind that is rarely made known. Other and more temperate and less biassed observers declared Charles Kemble a comedian of the highest order,—the best *Mercutio* of his time. He was not generally esteemed capital in tragedy, though his *Romeo* and his *Antony* were much admired. He appeared to uncommon advantage as *Posthumus*, by reason of his handsome face, his tall, imposing person (his height was five

feet eleven inches), and his graceful demeanor: Charles Kemble had dark hair and brilliant dark eyes.

Charles Mayne Young (1777-1856) was the *Posthumus*, February 9, 1829, in a revival of "Cymbeline" made at Drury Lane, with Louisa Anne Phillips as *Imogen*. Everything that is recorded of Young tends to deepen interest in his manly character, noble mind, amiable temperament, and intrinsic goodness, and to inspire admiration for his beautifully finished histrionic art. His style as an actor was founded on that of John Philip Kemble, between whom and himself there existed an affectionate friendship. He made *Posthumus* impressive to vision and interesting to fancy. He was exceptionally handsome. His temperament was one of exceeding sensibility. His voice was melodious and sympathetic, and he was a judicious, expert, and pleasing speaker. Macready's effervescent enthusiasm prompted him to say, of Young, that he was "sound, sensible, and scholar-like."

WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY.

Macready first acted *Posthumus* in the spring of 1811, at Newcastle. He was only eighteen and in his novitiate. "The *Duke of Aranza*," he writes, "in Tobin's charming play of 'The Honeymoon,' was my



introduction to comedy, and with *Posthumus Leonatus*, in 'Cymbeline,' and the part of *Orestes*, in Ambrose Philips's translation of Racine's 'Andromache,' confirmed me as the established favorite of the Newcastle audience." Two entries that he made in his later "Diary" are significant: "October 17, 1833. Acted part of *Posthumus* with freedom, energy, and truth, but there must have been observance of an absence of all finish." "May 18, 1837. Acted *Posthumus* in a most discreditable manner; undigested, unstudied. . . . I was ashamed of myself. . . . The audience applauded, but they knew not what they did."

Both those ventures were made at Covent Garden. Ellen Tree acted *Imogen* on the first of those occasions; Helena Faucit on the second. John Cooper and Edward William Elton were, respectively, the representatives of *Iachimo*. William Archer, in his careful, informative, well condensed biography of Macready, records that, on the London Stage, he acted *Posthumus* only nine times. He was not interesting in that part.

SAMUEL PHELPS AND G. V. BROOKE.

Samuel Phelps (1804-1878), who, in the course of his management of Sadler's Wells Theatre, London,—

from May 27, 1844, to March 15, 1862,—produced and acted in thirty of Shakespeare's plays, made an elaborate presentment of "Cymbeline," at that house, August 23, 1847, and acted *Posthumus*. Charles Dickens, who was present, wrote to him, saying:

"I cannot resist the impulse I feel to thank you for the very great pleasure I derived from the representation of 'Cymbeline' at your theatre. The excellent sense, taste, and feeling manifested throughout; the great beauty of all the stage arrangements; and the respectful consideration (so to speak) shown by every one concerned, for the creation of the poet, gave me extraordinary gratification."

Phelps was a stickler for "the original text," and it was a notable peculiarity of his performance of *Posthumus* that he spoke the frenzied tirade against Woman (Act II., sc. 5) with which the deceived and infuriated husband "unpacks his heart,"—a speech that all the earlier representatives of the character omitted. At that point and with the vociferous, agonizing, lamentable outburst, in the closing scene,—  
"Ay, so thou dost, Italian fiend!"—he wrought effects that were both tragic and pathetic.

Gustavus Vaughan Brooke (1819-1867), a fine genius, and one of Phelps's great contemporaries, was exceptionally successful as *Posthumus*, and his treatment of the part, at least in the passionate scenes, seems to have closely resembled that employed by

Phelps. Brooke's acting was much affected, first by the influence of Macready, later by that of James R. Anderson, whom, in particular, he greatly admired and considerably imitated. His Irish temperament, however, impelled him to improve on Anderson's cold and formal method, and, while following the example of his predecessors, he made *Posthumus*, at first, a serious, self-contained, urbane, polished man of the world,—haughty and icily elegant in the scene of the making of the wager,—he gave full way to volcanic passion in the scene in which, deceived and agonized, the wretched victim of infernal treachery believes his wife to have been seduced, and he exhibited the transition of feeling, from proud confidence to abject despair, with heart-breaking pathos. Such, in substance, is the testimony of good judges, who saw him act the part in Liverpool, in 1863.

#### VARIOUS REVIVALS.

The most recent presentment of "Cymbeline" on the London Stage was made by Henry Irving, at the Lyceum Theatre, in 1896. Between that and Phelps's production in 1847 there had been at least nine London representations. Phelps (who first acted *Posthumus*, September 23, 1838, at Covent Garden, with John Vandenhoff as *Iachimo* and Helena Faucit as



*Imogen*) revived the play, at Sadler's Wells, September 4, 1854, and again, September 26, 1857, himself acting *Posthumus*, with Henry Marston as *Iachimo*. Miss Fanny Cooper was the *Imogen* in 1854, and Mrs. Charles Young in 1857. On October 17, 1864, at Drury Lane, Phelps acted *Posthumus*, with William Creswick as *Iachimo* and Helena Faucit as *Imogen*. In 1843 "Cymbeline" was brought out at Drury Lane with James R. Anderson as *Posthumus*, Macready as *Iachimo*, and Miss Faucit as *Imogen*. On March 6, 1865, it was again acted at that theatre, Walter Montgomery appearing as *Posthumus*, J. R. Anderson as *Iachimo*, and Miss Faucit as *Imogen*. On March 30, 1872, it was presented at the Queen's Theatre, George Rignold being *Posthumus*, John Ryder *Iachimo*, and Henrietta Hodson *Imogen*. On December 3, 1878, it was revived at Drury Lane, Edward Compton acting *Posthumus*, John Ryder *Iachimo*, and Ellen Wallis *Imogen*. In 1883 Miss Wallis brought it out at the Gaiety Theatre, acting *Imogen* to the *Posthumus* of John H. Barnes and the *Iachimo* of Edward Smith Willard. No other production of "Cymbeline" occurred until that made by Irving.

## HENRY IRVING'S PRESENTMENT.

While Henry Irving was in America in the theatrical season of 1895-'96 he and I had several consultations, by his desire, relative to his then impending revival of "Cymbeline." Informed as to his general purpose and his wishes, and acting in compliance with his request, I cut and adapted the play for his use, making a fairly coherent arrangement of it,—which, under the limitations and requirements imposed, was all I could accomplish. After receiving the manuscript of my arrangement, Irving still further deleted and transposed the text, and then had his version printed. After further consideration and some rehearsal he cut it still more and shaped the version which, ultimately, he produced. It is in five acts and eighteen scenes, requiring seventeen settings, and it is, like all others that have been conspicuously produced, a disordered version,—not smoothly joined, and therefore inconsequent and almost unintelligible, except to persons thoroughly acquainted with the original. It contains about 1,750 lines; the original contains 3,748 lines. Irving was not desirous of producing the play, and he would not have done so, except in order to give Ellen Terry opportunity to act *Imogen*. After he put it in rehearsal his main object was, without injuring *Imogen*, to emphasize

the character of *Iachimo*. His feelings and intentions regarding the revival he afterward stated to me, in so many words, adding an illuminative comment about the play: "‘Cymbeline,’" he said, "except for *Imogen*, isn't worth a damn, for the stage."

Irving's production of "Cymbeline" (at the Lyceum Theatre, September 22, 1896) was rich and handsome: the dresses and scenery for it were designed by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema: among the former, those for *Imogen* were of exceptional beauty: the scenery was painted by Hawes Craven and J. Harker. The cost of the production was, approximately, \$20,000. Thirty-two consecutive performances were given at the Lyceum,—the play being then withdrawn for revival of "The Bells." "Cymbeline," however, was repeated at intervals. In all, seventy-two performances were given, with Irving and Miss Terry in the cast. On December 19, 1896, Irving made a revival of "King Richard III." at the Lyceum: after the performance he suffered an injury to his knee, due to a misstep on a flight of stairs in his home, which disabled him for a long time. On December 26, 1896, to keep his theatre open and his theatrical company employed, "Cymbeline" was revived, with Miss Julia Arthur as *Imogen*, and Cooper Cliffe as *Iachimo*. On January 23, 1897, Miss Terry, who had been resting in France, rejoined the Lyceum Company,



appearing, in place of Miss Arthur, as *Imogen*. The eighty-eighth and last performance of "Cymbeline" was given at the Lyceum on January 29. All the scenery for it was unfortunately destroyed, with that for about forty other plays, by a fire which consumed Irving's storehouse, under the South Eastern Railway arches, Bear Lane, Southwark, early in the morning of February 18, 1898.

Irving's revival of "Cymbeline" was largely labor lost. The setting of the play pleased the public more than the acting did. Irving was in poor health and in great distress of mind when the production was made. His performance of *Iachimo*, being his, was, necessarily, interesting and impressive; but it was not, and it never could have become, one of his great, representative embodiments. He presented "a man whose villany is the outcome less of a tempestuous nature than of deliberate intention." He endeavored to build, on the strength of the sudden and irrational conversion of *Iachimo*, in the last scene, a fabric of peculiar, intellectual character; a man naturally good yet self-debased by evil, and doing wrong against his better nature; an evil-doer who finally is shocked into remorse, repentance, and rectitude: in short, Irving strove to make *Iachimo* something much more and much better than he is, and thus to impart to him an importance, weight, and interest greater than he pos-

sesses. He even deviated from probability further than the dramatist has done, for he made-up *Iachimo* in such a way that, to some observers, he suggested Guido's portrait of Jesus Christ, and he put the weight of emphasis on the villain's contrition. It was an ingenious portrayal, but there is no authority for it. The chief merits of his embodiment were its burning intensity and that weirdly imaginative, poetic atmosphere with which this actor could so entirely and affectingly suffuse all that he did on the stage. One observer has recorded a suggestive detail of the performance: it would not be easy, he wrote, "to conceive a more striking or pathetic spectacle than that of the humiliated and contrite *Iachimo*, a strange, sad expression of nobility upon his face, as, in the Tent Scene, he stands abashed before his victors, in the presence of the injured *Posthumus* and *Imogen*."

Ellen Terry's performance of *Imogen* was, at some points, disordered and incorrect: she indulged, to a considerable extent, the lawless levity with which, from time to time, she was pleased to disfigure her personations, by the interpolation of exclamations, interjections, comments aside, etc., and sudden, extravagant, and, to her associate performers, obstructive, disconcerting movements and gestures. Nevertheless, her personation was splendidly impassioned and entirely right at other points, and it possessed

the overwhelming allurement of her strange, fascinating personality. She has recorded the interesting opinion that her *Imogen* was the "only inspired performance" given by her in the last ten years of her association with Irving, at the Lyceum,—1892-1902. The "pace" of the whole Lyceum representation, notwithstanding Irving's curtailment of the dialogue and his endeavor to expedite the movement, seems to have been, especially at first, oppressively sluggish. "Everything is so slow, so slow!" she notes, in her "Diary." The pervasive qualities of her *Imogen* seem to have been its girlishness (certainly a notable feature in a performance by an actress then more than forty-eight years old), its witchery of personal enchantment, its womanly tenderness, and its eager, if somewhat hoyden-like, glee. She was supremely good in the passion and anguish inspired by the lying letter from *Posthumus*, announcing his arrival at Milford Haven; in the moment of anxious boldness at the mouth of the cave, and in the moment of discovering the dead body of the supposed *Posthumus*. It is not "easy to give anything approaching an adequate impression of the frenzied agony of the situation (*sic*—personation) as *Imogen*, on her knees, with nervous hands outstretched to heaven, denounces the 'damn'd Pisanio.' Rarely has Miss Terry risen to so high a level of passionate despair."





*From a Photograph by Window & Grove*

*Author's Collection*

**ELLEN TERRY AS IMOGEN**

*"There's no more to say;  
Accessible is none but Milford way!"*

**ACT III., SC. 2**



Other notable actors in the Lyceum revival were Frank Cooper as *Posthumus*,—of which part he gave “a powerful and passionate study,”—Norman Forbes as *Cloten*, Frederic C. P. Robinson as *Belarius*, and Genevieve Ward as the *Queen*. To such a consummate actress as Miss Ward, with her decisive force of character, severe, formidable personality, and great vigor of execution, performance of such a part as the *Queen* was indeed “a property of easiness.”

CHARACTER, AND PLAYERS, OF *IMOGEN*.

*Imogen* is the incarnation of fidelity. She possesses many other fine characteristics, but that one is supreme. She loves: her love ennobles both its object and herself, and she is faithful forever. Evil, however speciously masked, assails her in vain. Her intuition pierces through every falsehood. She heeds no calumny. Where once her confidence is placed it is immovable. She is not supine. She feels the sting of injustice and reprehends it: but it inspires no malice, no bitterness of resentment, in her pure heart. There are few speeches more pathetically affecting than that of this lovely girl, after *Pisanio* has told her of her husband's accusation of infidelity:

“False to his bed! What is it to be false?

To lie in watch there and to think on him?



To weep 'twixt clock and clock? if sleep charge nature,  
 To break it with a fearful dream of him,  
 And cry myself awake? that's false to's bed, is it?"

But she is tender, gentle, trustful, noble, and absolutely unselfish, and this indignation quickly passes. Nothing can shake the constancy of her spirit,—neither unkindness, injustice, persecution, cruelty, nor the agony of grief. Her patience is inexhaustible, her fortitude sublime. She utters no reproach against the husband who has been so credulous of her frailty and dishonor and has barbarously contrived to have her murdered. She expresses only pity for her malignant enemy, the *Queen*. In all ways she is the true woman. Well may the villanous *Iachimo* exclaim, as he does at first sight of her:

"All of her that is out of door most rich!  
 If she be furnished with a mind so rare,  
 She is alone the Arabian bird, and I  
 Have lost the wager!"

Mrs. Pritchard (Hannah Vaughan—1711-1768) was, in her youth, admirable as *Beatrice*, in "Much Ado About Nothing," and, in her mature years, as the best of all performers of *Lady Macbeth*. No specific account of her *Imogen* (1746) has been found. It could not have been a performance of superlative merit,—her comedy having been of the

glittering order, and her tragedy intense and terrible. Garrick said that she "blubbered" in her expression of grief, particularly in *Volumnia's* last scene, in "Coriolanus." Davies says she was "in behavior easy and in speaking natural and familiar." It is certain that her impersonation of *Lady Macbeth* established the standard for that part. She was a great tragic actress, but, seemingly, not well suited to *Imogen*.

Mrs. Vincent was a versatile actress, and much admired. She acted not only *Imogen* (1759), but the strongly contrasted part of *Polly Peachum*, in Gay's musical play of "The Beggar's Opera." She is commended by even the caustic Churchill, in "The Rosciad":

"Lo! Vincent comes—with simple grace arrayed,  
She laughs at paltry arts, and scorns parade:  
Nature, through her, is by reflection shown,  
Whilst Gay once more knows *Polly* for his own.  
Talk not to me of diffidence and fear—  
I see it all, but must forgive it here;  
Defects like these, which modest terrors cause,  
From Impudence itself extort applause,  
Candor and Reason still take Virtue's part;  
We love ev'n foibles in so good a heart."

Miss Bride, who acted *Imogen* (1761) with Garrick as *Posthumus*, is mentioned by one nig-

gantly recorder as an actress who "belonged to Drury Lane Theatre in Mr. Garrick's time, 1763, and held a respectable situation." Churchill, in his "*Rosciad*," gives twenty lines to her, incidentally intimating the opinion that her rightful advancement had been impeded by the obstructive longevity of some lingering female veteran. His opinion of the actress is uncommonly favorable:

"If all the wonders of external grace,  
 A person finely turn'd, a mould of face  
 Where, union rare, Expression's lively force  
 With Beauty's softest magic holds discourse,  
 Attract the eye; if feelings, void of art,  
 Rouse the quick passions and inflame the heart;  
 If music, sweetly breathing from the tongue,  
 Captives the ear, Bride must not pass unsung."

Churchill's estimate, which there is no reason to reject, indicates that Miss Bride was qualified to give, and doubtless she gave, a much more than merely respectable performance of *Imogen*. It is not anywhere described.

Mrs. Yates (Maria Anna Graham, 1728-1787) acted *Imogen* (1763 and 1767). A contemporary recorder wrote that her performance of that part had great merit, but lacked an essential innocence, adding the information that she was deficient in pathos, and, at the same time, declaring that as *Queen Con-*



*stance* (in "King John") she was "great." Dramatic "criticism" is often perplexing. Mrs. Yates, unquestionably, was a tragic actress of the first magnitude, entirely competent as *Lady Macbeth*, *Queen Margaret*, and *Medea*. Her person was somewhat massive, and her style somewhat militant, for the loving, trusting *Imogen*.

Mrs. Bulkley (1745?-1792), whose maiden name was Wilford, began her stage career, in 1759, at Covent Garden, as a dancer, but she soon turned to acting, and eventually she became an accomplished comedian. Jackson, the historian of the Scottish Stage, who first saw her when she was about fifteen years old, at the house of her uncle, John Rich, manager of Covent Garden, says that her figure was, even then, elegant, and that "she possessed every advantage of education to render her accomplishments complete." She acted *Imogen* (1768 and 1782). The other Shakespearean parts that she assumed were *Cordelia*, *Viola*, *Portia*, *Rosalind*, *Beatrice*, *Hippolita*, *Queen Gertrude*, *Mrs. Ford*, and *Mrs. Page*. She was the original performer of *Miss Hardcastle*, in "She Stoops to Conquer," March 15, 1773, at Covent Garden. Mrs. Bulkley became Mrs. Barresford, 1789. Her death occurred in 1792, at Dumfries. In old chronicles her acting is commended for exemplary artistic finish. Her *Imogen* was

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compounded of tender feeling, simplicity, and grace.

The famous Elizabeth Barry (1658-1713), of Betterton's time, never acted *Imogen*. Her Shakespearean characters were *Queen Katharine* and *Lady Macbeth*. She was an actress of astonishing genius and great personal charm. The Mrs. Barry who played *Imogen* with Reddish (1770) was the excellent actress (Ann Street) first known as Mrs. Dancer, then as Mrs. Barry (wife of Spranger Barry), and then as Mrs. Crawford. She acted not only Shakespeare's *Imogen*, but also his *Cordelia*, *Desdemona*, *Helena*, *Juliet*, *Rosalind*, *Perdita*, *Lady Percy*, *Beatrice*, *Viola*, *Katharine*, *Lady Macbeth*, and *Constance*. Her tragedy was fine, but her comedy excelled her tragedy. She was accounted essentially "the lover" (Bernard). Every part that is tender, confiding, and impassioned was easily within her absolute control. Her *Imogen* was considered perfection. *How* she wrought her effects in it is not recorded.

Elizabeth Young (1740-1797), who acted *Imogen* (1784) in association with Henderson (she had played the part as early as 1768), was esteemed better in tragedy than in comedy. She was ranked next to Mrs. Yates and Mrs. Crawford, and an old commentator derives from contemporary records the

opinion that, after the retirement of those luminaries, she would have been, for the rest of her life, the best actress in tragedy, if Mrs. Siddons had not appeared. The veteran Macklin, who taught her how to act a Scotch comedy part, often said that he "felt the harmony and variety of her tones." One observer of her acting wrote that the leading trait of her performances was a sedate sensibility. Her figure was fine, her deportment graceful. This actress became (1785) the wife of the tragedian Alexander Pope (1736-1835). She was well qualified to act *Imogen*.

There was another Mrs. Pope (Maria Campion, 1775-1803), second wife of that actor (he married her, January 24, 1798, to console his brief widowhood, ten months), who also acted *Imogen*, *Cordelia*, *Desdemona*, and kindred parts. She had been known as Mrs. Spencer. "She was stricken with death [June 10, 1803, Covent Garden] in the Third Act of 'Othello,' when she was pleading for *Cassio*, but she did not die on the stage" (Genest).

Dora Jordan (1762-1816) acted *Imogen*, for the first time in London (1785), at Drury Lane, with J. P. Kemble as *Posthumus*. She had previously played the part, at York, under the management of Tate Wilkinson. Her performance of it in London attracted scrupulous critical attention. She had charmed the public as *Peggy*, in "The Country Girl,"



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and as *Viola*, in "Twelfth Night." She was less fortunate as *Imogen*:

"It was only in the male habit that Mrs. Jordan seemed the true and perfect *Imogen*. She had not the natural dignity of the wife of *Posthumus*. She could not burst upon the insolent *Iachimo* in the terrors of offended virtue. She could not wear the lightnings of scorn in her countenance. She hardly seemed out of personal *danger*; whereas *Imogen* could only be shocked by the impurity of suggestion, and knew her virtue no less than her rank secured her from a profane touch, let who might be the audacious libertine in her presence. It was never a favorite performance." (*Boaden*.)

Sarah Siddons (1755-1831) played *Imogen* for the first time in 1787, but she did not long retain the part in her repertory. When disguised as the boy, *Fidèle*, her "lofty beauty" and her majestic style naturally prevented the sustainment of illusion. To "boy parts" she was not suited. Her performance of *Imogen*, considered as a whole, was declared to be exquisite, and, in variety of manner, astonishing. *Boaden* says:

"Her scene with *Iachimo* was never approached. The reluctant recognition of the imputation as to her lord's fidelity, the detection of the villany, the scorn of her virtuous indignation, and the dignity with which she called upon *Pisanio* to relieve her from the wretch who had too

long 'abused her credulous ears' were triumphs, even for Mrs. Siddons."

LATER PLAYERS OF *IMOGEN*.—BRITISH STAGE.

Later players of *Imogen*, who, with varying fortunes, appeared on the London Stage between the time of Mrs. Pope and Mrs. Siddons and that of, perhaps, the most famous of all *Imogens*, Helena Faucit, were Sarah Smith, who acted the part at Covent Garden, January 18, 1806, to the *Posthumus* of J. P. Kemble and the *Iachimo* of George Frederick Cooke; Mrs. H. Johnston, who assumed it, at Covent Garden, June 3, 1812, to the *Posthumus* of Kemble and the *Iachimo* of Charles Mayne Young; Katharine Stephens (afterward Countess of Essex), who appeared in it, May 29, 1816, at Covent Garden, Kemble being *Posthumus* and Young *Iachimo*; Miss Costello, who played it at Covent Garden, March 15, 1817, to the *Posthumus* of Junius Brutus Booth; Sally Booth, who, at Covent Garden, undertook it, June 30, 1818, Macready being the *Posthumus*; Maria Foote, who acted it at Covent Garden, October 18, 1820 (and again in 1825), with Charles Kemble and Charles Mayne Young as, respectively, *Posthumus* and *Iachimo*; and Louisa Anne Phillips, who acted it, February 9, 1829, Young being the *Posthumus* and John Cooper the *Iachimo*.

## HELENA FAUCIT.

Helena Faucit played *Imogen*, for the first time, at Covent Garden, May 17, 1837,—Macready being *Posthumus* and William Elton *Iachimo*. Sir Theodore Martin, her husband, writes: "She struck a chord in the hearts of her audience, which was even then felt deeply, in a character in which she was later on [*sic*—a vile locution!] to make one of her greatest triumphs." In her book about Shakespeare's female characters she states that a chief concern of hers, during her first performance of the part, was the boy's dress: she seems to have suffered because of the necessity of showing her legs. Her costume for *Fidèle*, as first fashioned, included a tunic with skirts so long, reaching to her ankles, that it could not be distinguished from a woman's dress. Macready, seeing it, had it shortened. "I managed, however, to devise a kind of compromise," she writes, "by smothering myself in the franklin housewife's riding cloak [Act III., sc. 6] which I kept about me as I went into the Cave, and this I caused to be wrapped round me, afterward, when the brothers carry in *Imogen*."

This self-conscious squeamishness was later overcome, and Miss Faucit, who retained the part till the end of her career, devoted herself to the impersonation of it (a task which she declared was the most



difficult of all her labors), and did indeed make that personation "one of her greatest triumphs." She was in every way exceptionally well suited to the full and accurate apprehension and complete impersonation of *Imogen*. "She excelled in depiction of the pure, unselfish, self-sacrificing love of a virtuous woman." George Vandenhoff (formal, reticent, learned in his profession, and a severely critical observer), who acted with her, and who, though he "found her exacting" as an artistic associate, always felt it a great pleasure to act with her, wrote that "her expression of love is the *most beautifully confiding, truthful, self-abandoning* in its tone that I have ever witnessed in any actress." That testimony bears directly on the quality of her excellence as *Imogen*. She possessed a slender and beautiful person; innate dignity; alert and fine intelligence; keen perception; excessive sensibility; exceeding charm of personality; great refinement of nature as well as of manner; an unconscious, unobtrusive instinct of propriety, inherent virtue, and ardent feeling. *Imogen* was her favorite part, her "woman of women," and upon the embodiment of it she expended all her skill.

Miss Faucit's formulated theory of histrionic art is a thoroughly erroneous one, but, fortunately,—like many other actors who have written about acting,—she could and did act more wisely than she wrote

about it. Her theory, briefly, is that of "real feeling"—a necessity to surrender to "impulse of the moment" on the scene—to "forget" herself, etc. This theory is, at times, contradicted in her writings, and, apparently, it was more frequently contradicted in her acting. Careful consideration of the most authoritative testimony which has survived reveals that, at her best, she was a painstaking, careful artist, of a febrile, over-excitabile temperament. With the simple proposition that the true actor must play upon his emotions and passions in order to play upon those of his auditors all competent judges agree. The question which concerns the student of art in acting concerns method and effect. In scenes of great emotion the imagination, affecting the feelings, causes intense excitement of the nervous system and throughout the consciousness. The competent artist, the great actor, does not surrender to that excitement, does not yield to its impulses, but governs and guides it. Thus, all that is done under pressure of the controlled and directed animation, all of which has been carefully prepared (and indeed the excitement itself may also properly be said to have been "prepared"), is suffused with fervent vitality, fluency, power, and seeming spontaneity, imparting to the carefully planned performance an effect of actuality which irresistibly moves the spectator, and sometimes deeply affects the

player. This is what proponents of "real feeling," when they happen to be also fine actors, really mean,—though they do not correctly and clearly apprehend or formulate their meaning. "Be self-possessed; 'tis the whole art of living"—and certainly it is the whole basis of the art of acting. The "real feeling" of *Lady Macbeth* or *King Lear*, really experienced, every night, for a week, or less,—the agony of mind, the wearing and wasting emotions of a lifetime concentrated and compressed within a few hours,—would burn out and kill any man or woman that ever lived.

Miss Faucit, advocating a precisely opposite and destructive doctrine, has, nevertheless, recorded one of the most complete refutations of it, and one of the most instructive examples of *art* in acting, which is anywhere set down. In one of her letters she describes what she designates "the finest burst of passionate, speechless acting I ever saw or could have conceived." She refers to the last scene of "The Winter's Tale," showing the reunion of *Leontes* and *Hermione*. Macready acted *Leontes* and Miss Faucit, for the first time (September 30, 1837), assumed *Hermione*. She describes Macready's performance, from the point when *Hermione* has descended from the pedestal and moved to within a short distance of *Leontes*:



"Oh, can I ever forget Mr. Macready at this point! At first he stood speechless, as if turned to stone, his face with an awe-struck look upon it. Could this, the very counterpart of his queen, be a wondrous piece of mechanism? Could art so mock the life? He had seen her laid out as dead, the funeral obsequies performed over her, with her dead son beside her. Thus absorbed in wonder, he remained until *Paulina* said, 'Nay, present your hand.' Tremblingly he advanced, and touched gently the hand held out to him. Then, what a cry came with, 'Oh, she's warm!' It is impossible to describe Mr. Macready here. He was *Leontes*' very self! His passionate joy at finding *Hermione* really alive seemed [ay, mark that "*seemed*"!] beyond control. Now he was prostrate at her feet, then enfolding her in his arms. I had a slight veil or covering over my head and neck, supposed to make the statue look older. This fell off in an instant. The hair, which came unbound, and fell on my shoulders, was reverently kissed and caressed. The whole change was so sudden, so overwhelming, that I suppose I cried out hysterically, *for he whispered to me*, 'Don't be frightened, my child! Don't be frightened! Control yourself!'"

Thus, *in the executive expression* of an overwhelming, passionate emotion, which Miss Faucit hysterically describes as "a display of *uncontrollable* rapture," but every movement of which, actually, had been preconceived and was made with every appearance of utter abandonment, yet with perfect precision and "during a tumult of applause which sounded like a storm of hail," this truly great artist was wholly able to control himself and to reassure and

restrain the over-wrought, hysterical girl who was endangering his effect!

In her performance of *Imogen* Miss Faucit radiated an air of dignified amiability; her gestures were various and expressive: one observer laments the impossibility of preserving her attitudes in the scene with *Belarius* and the brothers, where she was "an echo of the vision stirred in the minds of the spectators" by the words,

"By Jupiter, an angel! or, if not  
An earthly paragon!"

She was, throughout, both woman and princess. Her voice is described as a "combination of richness, sweetness, tenderness, and sense." In the first scene with *Iachimo* she listened as one almost bewildered, till she perceived the drift and purpose of his foul report of her husband, then, at the cry "What, ho! Pisanio!" etc., her "terrible indignation" was "withering," and her tones were "full and grand." Her delivery of the speech

"I would have broke my eye-strings; crack'd them, but  
To look upon him, till the diminution  
Of space had pointed him sharp as my needle,  
Nay, follow'd him, till he had melted from  
The smallness of a gnat to air,"

was commended as a special gem of elocution and acting combined, so that the spectator "might believe . . . that she actually saw the retiring *Posthumus* dwindle into air." At the entrance to the Cave she employed an irresistibly winning combination of timidity, gentleness, and assumed boldness, pausing to listen after "Ho, who's there?" and at once relieved and troubled to receive no answer. Special praise was given to the feeling and tone with which she said: "Why did you throw your wedded lady from you?" Sir Edwin Arnold designated the personation "a true, graceful, and finished picture of a character in which" he had thought no one could satisfy him.

#### CHARACTER OF *IACHIMO*.

The odious *Iachimo* is a Roman, of high rank, "brother to Sienna,"—that is, "brother to the ruler of Sienna" (Rolfe). His age is about thirty. He should be tall, thin, dark, and handsome, of martial aspect, and, in personality, sinister. His manner is cold, blandly courteous, politely insolent. His speech is, generally, satirical. He is of the reptile order,—crafty, subtle, furtive, malignant, specious; a sensualist; a libertine; cruel and of an inflexibly wicked will. He knows himself to be corrupt, and, judging others by himself, he cynically disbelieves in virtue.



He is a revolting villain, self-dedicated to a course of damnable treachery, without any direct cause, unless it be the contemptible motive of merely mercenary gain: he has wagered half his fortune, and he does not mean to lose it if lying will save it. The dramatist, for an obviously theatrical reason,—the advantage of a happy ending,—and indulging the dubious expedient of an over-tolerant benevolence, has portrayed him as eventually overwhelmed with remorse for his infernal crime, and made repentant: but innate depravity is not thus airily extirpated,—except in plays. Shakespeare was entirely in earnest when he drew *Iago*, but he seems not to have been so when he drew *Iachimo*. Nothing can redeem the hideous villainy of his conduct. He is both diabolical and loathsome. The text plainly shows that between *Iachimo* and *Posthumus* there is an instinctive, natural hostility. *Iachimo* had seen *Posthumus*, in Britain, before their meeting in Rome, and had taken a profound dislike to him. Such a thing continually happens in actual life,—human beings hating each other for no assignable reason. The indirect impulse of *Iachimo's* rascality resides in conscious inferiority to *Posthumus*, and in consequent envy and spite. It is to be noted not only that he has been in Britain before he goes there to endeavor to betray *Imogen*, but that when he comes there, in time of war, he is

the leader of a force of gentlemen of Rome who have been enrolled by the Roman Senate for the expedition. He should be represented as of beguiling craft combined with exceptional depravity, but as a person who has made himself generally accepted as trustworthy,—a plausible scoundrel.

PLAYERS OF *IACHIMO*.

—— Hale played *Iachimo*, April 7, 1746, at Covent Garden. He is described as tall, manly, and pleasing, possessed of a strong, harmonious voice, and as being monotonous in style. His performance of *Hotspur* was deemed his best. Nothing is said of his *Iachimo*. John Palmer, who acted the part December 1, 1770, at Drury Lane, was an adept in parts requiring winning plausibility and convincing dissimulation, and his excellence as *Iachimo* was unequivocal. Charles Holland, who played it, under Garrick's direction, November 28, 1761, at Drury Lane, with his commanding appearance, fine voice, earnest spirit, and winning demeanor, was specially successful. William Smith, who acted the part, December 28, 1767, at Covent Garden, is declared to have been quite suited to it, giving an elegant, insinuating, profoundly effective performance. Richard Wroughton (his original name was Rotton), a "sound and sensible" actor, whose

face was not expressive and whose voice was not pleasing, seems to have been merely mechanical in the part. He played it, at Covent Garden, October 6, 1784, in association with Henderson. Alexander Pope, whose "showy person," soft, musical voice, and graceful manner commended him for the part, was successful in it, at Covent Garden, May 13, 1800. Later performers of *Iachimo* were John Cooper, 1829; William Elton, 1837; John Vandenhoff, 1838; Henry Marston, 1847; William Creswick, 1864; James R. Anderson, 1865; John Ryder, 1878; Edward Smith Willard, 1883; Henry Irving, 1896; and Cooper Cliffe, 1896.

## GEORGE FREDERICK COOKE.

George Frederick Cooke acted *Iachimo*, January 18, 1806, at Covent Garden, in one of Kemble's presentments of "Cymbeline." Competent judgment, in Cooke's time (1757-1812), ranked him as one of the greatest of actors, within a circumscribed range. It was said of him that "those parts which he did play well he played better than anybody else." In his own judgment he was inferior to John Philip Kemble: "Kemble is an actor," so he wrote; "he is my superior, though they did not think so in London; I acknowledge it." He was not, however, at all



times willing to "acknowledge it," and, in such characters as *King Richard the Third*, *Falstaff*, and *Iago*, there is no sufficient reason to believe that he was inferior to Kemble. Fennell, an acute observer of persons and acting, particularly specifies "the extraordinary and beautiful intonation of Cooke's voice." *Posthumus* he never played, but as *Iachimo* he was perfection. There is an illuminating description of his performance of that part, written by George Daniel, who is remembered as one of the familiar friends of Charles Lamb, and who edited the thirty-nine volumes of "Cumberland's British Theatre": his "D—— G——", with which inversion of his initials he affected to disguise his signature, appears at the end of each preface in that collection of plays:

"Cooke's look and manner, when he emerges from the chest, in *Imogen's* chamber, were terribly impressive. An aspect of more superhuman villany, dashed with fearful apprehension, was never exhibited on the stage. The audience was hushed into the deepest silence, by his half-broken yet distinct whispers. His deathlike tread rendered the sleep of *Imogen* more profound." Mention follows of "his gloating eye, wandering over her beauties; his breathless caution, when he unclasps the bracelet; the irresolution and fear that alternately retard and hasten his return to the chest, and his fiendlike smile of exultation when he closes it."

Macready assumed *Iachimo* at the age of twenty-seven, acting at Covent Garden, October 18, 1820,

under management of Harris. His personation was critically recorded as "the worst ever seen" ("London News"). In his "Reminiscences" he says, of this effort: "I made little impression"; adding, however, the remark: "To *Iachimo* I gave no prominence, but in subsequent years I entered with glowing ardor into the wanton mischief of the dissolute, crafty Italian." The effects of that "glowing ardor" and the methods used in its manifestations are not stated. On the London Stage he played *Iachimo* only six times.

CHARACTER OF *CLOTEN*.

*Cloten*, a prince in station but in nothing princely, is designated as "too bad for bad report,"—meaning that no report, however bad, could be bad enough to describe him. He is the son of the *Queen* by her first husband. In stature and build he resembles *Posthumus*,—for, in the course of the play, he puts on clothes of *Posthumus*, and that raiment fits him sufficiently well for him to remark: "How fit his garments serve me!"—Act IV., sc. 1. And his headless body, dressed in the clothes of *Posthumus*, resembles that of *Imogen's* banished husband enough to deceive her, for she exclaims, when, as *Fidèle*, she awakes from her trance,

“The garments of Posthumus!  
 I know the shape of ’s leg: this is his hand;  
 His foot Mercurial: his Martial thigh;  
 The brawns of Hercules,” etc.

*Cloten* would seem to be a florid, red-haired man, of harsh features. His manner is aggressive, intrusive, and truculent. He is an obtuse, blustering bully. He speaks impetuously. Mention is made of “*Snatches* in his voice and *bursts* of speaking.” He shows animal courage, but in him this proceeds from arrogance, vainglorious egotism, and lack of judgment. He insults inferiors in rank, and he is saturated with conviction that he is too important to be resisted by others, or hurt by anything. *Belarius* says of him:

“Being scarce made up,  
 I mean, to man, he had not apprehension  
 Of roaring terrors; for defect of judgment  
 Is oft the cure of fear.”

Knight and other commentators say that *Cloten* was no more than a lad when known to *Belarius*, but Dr. Ingleby would make *Cloten* “a middle-aged man,” and Rolfe seems to concur in that view. But, in that case, the *Queen* would be at least sixty years old: yet “she was beautiful,” and *Cymbeline*, at the beginning of the play, had but recently married



her: "A widow, that late he married,"—Act I., sc. 1. She could not have been old. Dr. Ingleby's point is that "defect of judgment," in *Cloten*, is "*defective use of judgment.*" But, if only the *use* of the judgment is defective, it would seem to indicate that *Cloten* *did* possess *good* judgment, but did not apply it well. "Defect of judgment" in the sense of *lack of judgment*, that is, not knowing or understanding enough of danger to fear it, makes a clearer meaning. Dr. Ingleby says:

"When it is said that a certain person is 'scarce made up,' it means that he had not a man's judgment. *Cloten*, being scarce made up, took no heed of terrors that roared loud enough for men with their wits about them, and thus he braved danger; for it is *the defective use of judgment (when men have any)* which is oft the cause of fear."

*Cloten's* age, however, is not distinctly indicated. *Belarius* has lived in exile from the Court of *Cymbeline* for twenty years:

*"This twenty years*

This rock and these demesnes have been my world  
Where I have liv'd at honest freedom."

When *Cloten* comes to Wales, in search of the fugitive *Imogen*, *Belarius*, seeing him and hearing his voice, says:

"I *partly* know him; 'tis

Cloten, son o' the Queen. . . .

I saw him not these many years, and yet

I know 'tis he."

And in Act IV., sc. 4, *Belarius* says:

"Many years,

Though Cloten then but young, you see, not wore him

From my remembrance."

The supposition that *Cloten* is "a middle-aged man" rests on the premise that *Belarius* has not seen him since leaving the Court of *Cymbeline*, "some twenty years" prior to the encounter in Wales, and that, as *Cloten's* appearance has not materially changed within that time, he must have been at least eighteen or twenty when last seen by *Belarius*. This view is not clearly justified, because *Belarius*, at some time in the course of his exile, *may* have, without himself being perceived, seen *Cloten* again, and heard him speak, when the latter was on a journey,—possibly on the occasion of some former expedition to Milford Haven, a seaport much frequented, apparently, by members of *Cymbeline's* Court. If such an incident had occurred *ten* years earlier (and ten years, surely, might be called "many years"), and had *Cloten* been *then* only eighteen or twenty years old, which would be "then but young," he would be only twenty-eight or thirty, on the occasion

of his last expedition into Wales. This theory gains some strength from the fact that *Belarius* does not lack at least some knowledge of proceedings at Court—for he says, “’Tis Cloten, son o’ the Queen”; yet she had only lately become *Queen*.

*Cloten*, in his soliloquy (Act IV., sc. 1), says, of himself, that he is “no less young” than *Posthumus*, meaning that he is not older than the person, by him detested, whom *Imogen* has preferred to marry: and the youth of *Posthumus* is clearly established. *Imogen* is not more than twenty, and *Imogen* says (Act IV., sc. 1) to her father:

“Sir,

It is your fault that I have lov’d Posthumus:  
You bred him as my playfellow”; etc.

In which case the difference of age, especially between a girl and a boy, could hardly have been more than five years, and, probably, was *less*. It is absolutely essential to the conditions of the play that *Cloten*, like *Posthumus*, should be a young man, twenty-five or, at most, twenty-eight, for there should not be much difference between their ages: and some such theory of reasoning as I have invented in examining this play is necessary to harmonize the confusion and discrepancies of age which Shakespeare’s characteristically heedless methods of construction have provided.



In old days of the Stage *Cloten* was viewed as a comic character. Comic he may be, in a restricted sense, as every egregiously conceited, self-sufficient, loquacious, intrusive person is comic: but his comicality is of a highly disagreeable kind. He is more ludicrous, or preposterous, than comic,—as *Roderigo* is (in “*Othello*”), whom, distantly, he somewhat resembles. Absurd and ludicrous though he is, by reason of his egregious vanity and the self-sufficient antics that mark his conduct, he is malicious, mischievous, of a hectoring disposition, nasty in his propensities, and in a way formidable. He is spoken of as an ass, and wonder is expressed that his clever, dominant, potent mother should have borne such a fool. There are moments, however, when he shows malignant force. He is an extremely difficult part to apprehend and properly impersonate. In early casts of “*Cymbeline*” *Cloten* was, almost invariably, allotted to the comedian; sometimes to one of fine ability and high rank. On the old English Stage the part was played by King, 1761; Yates, 1767; Dodd, 1770; Edwin, 1782; Quick, 1784, and Liston, 1816.

#### CHARACTER OF *CYMBELINE*.

*Cymbeline*, King of Britain, should be represented as of solid, imposing figure and fine presence. Early

marriage was customary in ancient times. *Cymbeline*, it is reasonable to assume, was married at about the age of twenty. His eldest child, *Guiderius*, and his second child, *Arviragus*, were stolen from the nursery "some twenty years" before the beginning of the play (Act I., sc. 1). *Guiderius* was then three years old, while *Arviragus*, "i' the swathing clothes," was two years old. In Act III., sc. 3, *Belarius* says, apostrophizing the absent *Cymbeline*:

"At three and two years old I stole these babes,  
Thinking to bar thee of succession."

In view of the motive thus clearly avowed by *Belarius* it must be concluded that *Imogen* was unborn, at the time of the theft of the two boys, because, if she had been in "the nursery," she also would have been stolen; and, if she were then living, but beyond the reach of *Belarius* and his accomplice, the nurse *Euriphile*, he could not have thought to bar *Cymbeline* of succession by stealing only the two boys and leaving the daughter.

*Imogen* is younger than the second *Prince*. At the opening of the play *Guiderius* is twenty-three, *Arviragus* twenty-two, and *Imogen* not more than twenty—probably, nineteen. It will be observed that only one year elapsed between the births of *Cym-*

*beline's* two sons. It is not unreasonable to suppose, therefore, that the eldest child was born in the first year of *Cymbeline's* first marriage; and, supposing that marriage to have occurred when *Cymbeline* was twenty, he would be forty-four when the play begins. Even supposing that he did not marry till he was thirty, his age, at the beginning of the play, would be fifty-four. His second marriage had occurred but a short time before the opening of the play. Reference is made, in Act I., sc. 1, to the *Queen* as "a widow, that *late* he married."

*Cymbeline* should have iron-gray hair, and full beard, not very long. "Some of them [the Gauls] shave their beards, others let them grow *a little*" (Diodorus Siculus). "They [the Britons] differ but little from the Gauls" (Julius Cæsar). For the sake of dramatic effect it is desirable that *Cymbeline* should possess a grave, severe aspect, such as usually accompanies a more advanced period of life than that to which actually he has arrived; that is, he should look older than he is.

*Cymbeline's* temper is fiery and his manner variable; sometimes impetuous, sometimes composed. He is married to a woman younger than himself, and he is completely subservient to her will and influence. He loves his daughter, *Imogen*, but he would exact implicit obedience from her, and he is imperious and



irrational in his treatment of her. He makes a brave show of authority, but his character is weak.

PISANIO.

*Pisanio's* age is about forty-five. His countenance is pleasing; his aspect is calm and benevolent, his manner self-possessed, kindly, and grave. He is a faithful, confidential, trusted servant to *Posthumus*, and afterward to *Imogen*. He is prompt in action, but unobtrusive; intelligent and observant, yet not so distrustful of the *Queen*,—whom he knows to be his master's enemy,—that she cannot deceive him, as denoted by the incident of the box containing the drug.

AMERICAN STAGE.—EARLY REPRESENTATIONS.

In modern times "Cymbeline" has not been popular on the American Stage. In the beginning it was so. It was the seventh of Shakespeare's plays (counting the two parts of "King Henry IV." as one) to be produced in America, and the first performance of it here was given by "The American Company," at the Southwark Theatre, Philadelphia, May 25, 1767. The first performance of it in New York occurred, December 28, the same year, at the John Street

Theatre. Garrick's version was the first produced here. The cast on that occasion is interesting as part of the record:

<i>Posthumus</i> .....	Lewis Hallam
<i>Iachimo</i> .....	David Douglass
<i>Cymbeline</i> .....	—— Allyn
<i>Pisanio</i> .....	Mrs. Harman
<i>Cloten</i> .....	—— Wall
<i>Belarius</i> .....	Owen Morris
<i>Guiderius</i> .....	—— Greville
<i>Arviragus</i> .....	Stephen Wools
<i>Queen</i> .....	Mrs. David Douglass
<i>Imogen</i> .....	Margaret Cheer

The first cast in New York was the same as that in Philadelphia, except that *Pisanio*, played there by Mrs. Harman, was here assumed by Morris, while *Belarius*, originally acted by Morris, was acted by John Henry. Margaret Cheer was an actress of established reputation and mark. She made her first appearance in America at the Southwark Theatre, Philadelphia, as *Katharine*, in "Katharine and Petruchio," November 21, 1766. During her first season in America she acted, among other parts, *Portia*, *Ophelia*, *Juliet*, *Cordelia*, and *Lady Macbeth*, as well as *Imogen*. Her performance of the part is nowhere described. That it was good there can be no doubt, but, for the purposes of this work, that fact alone does not, alas, signify much! Miss —— Hallam (niece of Mrs. David Douglass, and cousin of

Lewis Hallam, the Second), who, about 1769 or 1770, succeeded Miss Cheer as *Imogen*, occupied an eminent position on the American Stage, as indicated by her extensive repertory of major parts. She was specially renowned for her performance of *Imogen*, and in that character a portrait of her was painted by that amazingly versatile person, Charles Wilson Peale (1741-1827), artist, engraver, silversmith, inventor, naturalist, soldier, politician, writer, lecturer, etc., who painted the first portrait of Washington, and who was the father of the more distinguished painter Rembrandt Peale. The portrait of Miss Hallam is lost. On August 30, 1770, at Annapolis, Miss Hallam gave a performance of *Imogen* which elicited from an anonymous writer, in "The Maryland Gazette," signing himself "Y. Z.," a glowing tribute, more extravagant than informing, to her "delicacy of manner," "classical strictness of expression," and "the music of her tongue." This enthusiast furthermore declares that Miss Hallam had reminded him of the great Mrs. Cibber, of Garrick's time; had displayed a true and thorough knowledge of her part, and was possessed of a "form and dimensions" "happily convertible and universally adapted to the variety of her parts." The same authority states that the play was well set and well acted, but, as usual, gives no specific information as to the scenery, costumes,



and particulars of the acting. There can, however, be no doubt of Miss Hallam's success and popularity in the part of *Imogen*. Twelve stanzas, also published in "The Maryland Gazette," extoll her as possessed of "magic powers to please" and "the art to catch the glowing ray" of Shakespeare's genius. One of them exclaims:

"Ye Gods! 'Tis Cytheréa's face;  
'Tis Dian's faultless form;  
But hers alone the nameless grace  
That every heart can charm."

Thirty-four lines of verse, addressed to Peale, in commendation of his art and prompted by his portrait of Miss Hallam as *Imogen* (which showed her in the Cave Scene), were also published in "The Gazette," some of which indicate the impression made in that scene:

"When Hallam as *Fidèle* comes distressed  
Tears fill each eye and passion heaves each breast;  
View with uplifted eyes the charming maid,  
Prepared to enter, though she seems afraid;  
And see, to calm her fears and soothe her care,  
*Belarius* and the royal boys appear."

There is record of fifteen presentments of "Cymbeline" on the American Stage, chiefly in Philadelphia and New York, within the thirty years

immediately following the first performance of it in America, in 1767, and probably other productions of it were made which were not recorded. No description has been found of the *Posthumus* of Lewis Hallam, the Second, or the *Iachimo* of David Douglass. Both were good actors and amply experienced. Mrs. Douglass (she had been Mrs. Hallam, wife of the elder of that name, who died in 1756, and she was the mother of the first *Posthumus* in America) came from the Goodman's Fields Theatre, London, where she had been the leading actress. She was, in her period (she died in 1773), the foremost woman of the American Stage. Such a part as the *Queen* could have made no serious demand on her abilities. Douglass also came from the London Stage and, proficient in many parts, he doubtless acted *Iachimo* according to the usage existent there. Among the successors of Hallam as *Posthumus*, on the early American Stage, were James Fennell, 1794, and ——— Chalmers, 1795. Successors of David Douglass as *Iachimo* were John Henry, 1772; ——— Cleveland, 1796; and Joseph Tyler, 1797. Henry was distinguished in the leading Shakespearean parts, particularly *Othello*. Chalmers was esteemed an actor second only to the brilliant John Hodgkinson, contemporaneously styled "the Garrick of America." All these actors were English. The most prominent successors to Miss

Hallam as *Imogen* were Mrs. Charles E. Whitlock (Elizabeth Kemble,—sister of Sarah Kemble, Mrs. Siddons,—1761-1835), who played the part in Boston, in 1796,—she had probably played it elsewhere before then,—and Mrs. John Johnson, who played it at the John Street Theatre, New York, April 24, 1797. Particular accounts of their performances have not been discovered. Mrs. Johnson was twenty-seven years old when she first acted *Imogen*. She possessed a fine, handsome person, a beautiful face, and a gentle, affectionate nature. She was distinguished as a good dresser, but I have found no particulars of her *Imogen* costumes. Mrs. Whitlock's *Fidèle* dress, an amazing one, is described by William B. Wood, in his "Recollections," 1855. It "consisted of a tight vest, and pantaloons of a sky-blue satin, fitting closely, and scarcely the apology for a very short cloak. This was the dress of one of the largest female performers ever seen on our Stage, and excited no disapprobation or remark."

In the nineteenth century revivals of "Cymbeline" on the American Stage were comparatively few. Charles Kean acted *Posthumus* in a presentment made at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, in 1830. He concentrated his power and his art in that character upon the passages in the last scene of the Fifth Act. Throughout the earlier portions of the play he



was adequate, but there was nothing more in his acting than scholarly and competent fulfilment of the exigencies of the part. In the last scene he stood concealed behind a group of soldiers and courtiers, listening to the confession of *Iachimo*, "Methinks I see him now,"—at which point he sprang from his concealment with startling abruptness of fury, ejaculating the line, "Ay, so thou *dost*, Italian fiend!" "with a wild outburst of passion, sharp, harsh, and rattling in tone." In this situation he employed the method of his great father (upon whom, indeed, all his acting was founded), and he made much of that speech, passing through an exacting gamut of wild rage and remorse, agonized self-reproach, bold and ringing adjuration, imperious command, fierce, imperious denunciation, and semi-delirious excitement, ending with a sudden and deeply affecting change to pity and tenderness on the utterance of the words:

"O Imogen!

My queen, my life, my wife! O Imogen,  
Imogen, Imogen!"

About 1837 the play was presented at the Tremont Theatre, Boston, with Junius Brutus Booth as *Iachimo* and Mrs. George H. Barrett as *Imogen*. A production was effected at the old Bowery Theatre, New York, February 28, 1848, with Thomas Barry

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as *Posthumus*, Wyzeman Marshall as *Iachimo*, and Eliza Shaw as *Imogen*. The fine comedian Charles Burke, half-brother of Joseph Jefferson, played *Cloten*. Mrs. Shaw, an actress of great ability, was no longer in her prime, had become portly in figure, and was too heavy for *Imogen*: it is probable she had played that part much earlier. Barry and Marshall were experienced actors, of respectable talent, always competent, but, beyond that, in no way remarkable. On May 21, 1856, the beautiful and sparkling Julia Bennett (Mrs. Jacob) Barrow played *Imogen*, at the Boston Theatre, Boston, H. F. Daly being the *Iachimo* and that great actor, John Gilbert, the *Belarius*. "Cymbeline" was next revived about 1857, at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, by William Wheatley, under the direction of William S. Fredericks. No other performance of it occurred, whether on the New York Stage or elsewhere, that I have been able to find (though I think it almost certain that, outside the metropolis, one or more must have been given), till the time of Adelaide Neilson. On February 12, 1877, Miss Neilson produced the play at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, and acted *Imogen*, playing the part for the first time.



*From a Photograph*

*In the Collection of the Author*

ADELAIDE NEILSON AS IMOGEN

*"Best draw my sword; and if mine enemy  
But fear the sword like me, he'll scarce look on't!"*

ACT III., Sc. 6





## ADELAIDE NEILSON'S PRESENTATION.

On May 14, 1877, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, Miss Neilson played the part for the first time in New York. She was then making a professional tour of the United States, under the management of Max Strakosch. Her chief associates in the cast of "Cymbeline" were Joseph Wheelock, Sr., as *Posthumus*, John B. Studley as *Iachimo*, Charles Fisher as *Belarius*, John Drew as *Cloten*, Frank Hardenberg as *Pisanio*, Joseph Haworth as *Arviragus*, Edmund Collier as *Cymbeline*, and Mrs. G. H. Gilbert as the *Queen*. The play was richly dressed. Miss Neilson gave a charming performance of *Imogen*. She had long studied the part. Her ideal of it was true, and her execution of it was smooth, graceful, and firm. The features of this actress were not regular, but in the slight irregularity of them there was a peculiar, piquant charm. Her eyes were exceedingly beautiful,—large, dark, luminous, velvety; now brilliant with the fire of passion, now placid and gentle; at all times wonderfully expressive. Her voice was rich in quality, strong, melodious, and sympathetic, and she used it with consummate skill. Her figure was slender, her demeanor was engaging, and equally in her speaking and her acting she was seemingly spontaneous. It was easy for her to look like *Imogen* and she expressed the

delicate charm of the part in a manner that captivated her audience. Her personality, according absolutely with that of the character, asserted itself with potent allurements. Simplicity, affectionate ardor, impassioned dignity, the resentment of intrinsic virtue wrongly and cruelly accused, a delicious capriciousness, made up of innocence, grace, the desire to please, and the winning condition of being involuntarily engaging, were attributes of that personality, and the performance therefore was one of winning loveliness. Special excellences of her embodiment were the manner of passionate tenderness toward *Posthumus*, in the First Act; the extraordinarily vivid though silent impartment of suffering while listening to *Iachimo*, in her interview with him, followed by the sudden blaze of indignation; the death-like abruptness of her swoon on reading the letter of *Posthumus* to *Pisanio*; the wild, despairing cry of agony with which she flung herself on the dead body of the supposed *Posthumus*, and the frenzy with which she kissed, again and again, the dead hands and senseless clothing of what she took to be her husband,—a burst of genuine tragic power. I cannot better summarize this memorable performance than by printing here a few words which I have written about it elsewhere:

Shakespeare could not have been an exception to the natural rule that every author obeys a feeling,



distinct from intellectual purpose, which impels him in the exercise of his art. The feeling that shines through "Cymbeline" is a loving delight in the character of *Imogen*. The nature of that feeling and the quality of that character, had they been obscure, would have been made clear by Adelaide Neilson's embodiment, which exhibited a temperament neither embittered by hard experience nor vapid with excess of goodness, and a delicious type of seductive womanhood, without one touch of wantonness or guile,—a woman innately good and radiantly lovely, who, amid severest trials, spontaneously acted with the ingenuous grace of childhood, the amplest generosity, the most constant spirit. . . . Miss Neilson, with her uncommon graces of person, found it easy to make the Chamber Scene and the Cave Scene pictorial and charming. Her ingenuous trepidation and her pretty wiles, as *Fidèle*, in the Cave, were finely harmonious with the character and arose from it like odor from a flower. The innocence, the glee, the feminine desire to please, the pensive grace, the fear, the weakness, and the artless simplicity made up a state of gracious fascination. It was, however, in the revolt against *Iachimo's* perfidy, in the fall before *Pisanio's* cruel disclosure, and in the frenzy over the supposed death of *Leonatus* that the actress put forth electrical power and showed how strong emotion, acting through the imagination,

can transfigure the being and give to love or sorrow a monumental semblance and an everlasting voice. The power was harmonious with the individuality and did not mar its grace. There was a perfect preservation of sustained identity, and this was expressed with such a sweet elocution and such an airy freedom of movement and flexibility of gesture that the observer neglected to notice the method of the mechanism and forgot that he was looking upon a fiction.—If it be the justification of the Stage as an institution of public benefit and social advancement that it elevates humanity by presenting noble ideals of human nature and making them exemplars and guides, that justification was practically accomplished by that beautiful performance.

SUBSEQUENT REPRESENTATIONS.—DAVENPORT.—  
MODJESKA.—MARLOWE.—MATHER.

Since the time of Adelaide Neilson there have been only five players of *Imogen* on our Stage,—namely Fanny Davenport, 1879; Helena Modjeska, 1887-'88; and later; Margaret Mather, 1890 and 1897; Julia Marlowe, 1890; and Viola Allen, 1906. Miss Davenport seldom played the part: she was a dashing, rich, voluptuous beauty, full of animal spirits, romp, and mischief, accomplished in a wide range of character,

proficient, in a technical sense, in most, and excellent in some. She was unsuited to *Imogen* alike in temperament and method: she assumed exceedingly well, however, the semblance of a boy.

Helena Modjeska, a beautiful woman and a great actress, was, perhaps, a little too mature, intellectual and commanding for *Imogen*, and hence over-weighted the part, but she was an accomplished artist in all that she did, and of this part her embodiment was essentially woman-like and very charming. In person Mme. Modjeska was of medium height, slender and symmetrical. Her demeanor was elegant, her manner distinctly patrician. Her eyes were grey, her features were regular, her countenance, somewhat sad in repose, was capable of great and various expression, at times sparkling with gayety, at times animated with power and fervor of passionate feeling. Her hair was abundant and in hue a lovely brown. The poise of her head was notably fine, and it instantly arrested attention, suggesting the erect, alert carriage of the deer. Looking at her, I often thought of the nobility and refinement of a white marble statue, such as the exquisite Aphrodite of Cnidus. Her voice was singularly sweet and sometimes involuntarily pathetic. In all her acting she evinced high intelligence, delicious refinement, and exceeding sensibility. As *Imogen* she was most effective in her imperious resentment and



withering scorn of *Iachimo's* lies about the absent *Posthumus*, in her expression of passionate anguish when told of her husband's cruel letter to *Pisanio*, and when vindicated at last. Mme. Modjeska first produced "Cymbeline" in 1887.

Julia Marlowe's revival of "Cymbeline" was not important. She acted *Imogen* and personally was handsome and pleasing. She seemed to comprehend the essential quality of the character,—innocent, lovely, confiding, faithful womanhood,—and she is known to have declared that *Imogen* is her favorite among the women of Shakespeare. In her acting of the part, however, she did not evince deep sympathy with it, nor was her execution facile.

The first performance of *Imogen* by Miss Mather of which there is record was given November 20, 1890, at Hammerstein's Columbus Theatre, New York. That excellent romantic actor Otis Skinner was the *Posthumus*. The principal endeavor made by Miss Mather as *Imogen* occurred in a revival of "Cymbeline" effected in New York, January 26, 1879, at Wallack's Theatre. The version of the play then used was made by Miss Mather, who slashed the text in a ruthless manner, far beyond the requirements of condensation, in order to provide for elaborate, pretentious scenic display. There was, accordingly, an excess of garniture in the setting, some of it hand-

some, much of it vulgarly overladen with gilding and garish color. *Imogen's* chamber, for example, which should be hung with "silk and silver," displayed a tapestry most inappropriately depicting the story of Antony and Cleopatra. The best of the scenes were a view of the Welsh hills near Milford Haven, and the Cave, painted by Walter Burridge: these denoted some sensibility to natural beauty and also a skilful use of perspective. The element of spectacle was emphasized throughout. There was a dance by women, to sensuous music, in the house of *Philario*, at Rome; there were numerous courtiers, male and female, in gaudy dresses of rich material studded with glass jewels; there was a mob of soldiers, and there was prodigious din and pother over a Battle Scene. The serenade, "Hark, hark, the lark," was sung by a quartet of male voices, without instrumental accompaniment, and the effect of the vocalism was good.

*Posthumus* was acted by Harrison J. Wolf, whose performance was insignificant. *Iachimo* was assumed by Edward J. Henley,—an experienced actor, of exceptional histrionic talent, but of a coarse, vulgar, vicious mind and temperament, which, permeating his acting, made it generally repellent. This performer possessed some imagination and power, and his performance of *Iachimo* was, in a lurid way, picturesque

and effective. He had played the part (with Mme. Modjeska), before his association with Miss Mather. The play had been rehearsed (in the current phrase "produced") by Eugene W. Presbrey, an experienced, harsh director, of considerable ability: he and Miss Mather quarrelled, at a dress-rehearsal, and he left her employment before the opening performance at Wal-lack's. Her production of "Cymbeline" was, at first, almost chaotic, but the defects of insufficient preparation were, in time, to some extent overcome, though the radical defects were, in the nature of things, irremediable, so that the predominant result of the presentment, even at its best, was that of haste, confusion, and noise. The chief reason for the revival of the play by this actress, in 1897, seemed to be that "Cymbeline" had then recently been presented in London by Henry Irving, and that he had announced it for presentation here. Whenever Irving took snuff most of the English-speaking actors and managers of his day sneezed. Miss Mather possessed no qualification for the acting of *Imogen*, whether physical or mental. She laid much stress on the rebuke to *Iachimo*: she was, as an executant, best in the moment of discovering the dead body of *Cloten* which *Imogen* mistakes for that of *Posthumus*. But the nature she revealed was shallow and common. Her temperament was unsympathetic, her elocution artificial, and disfig-



ured by a blurring of the letter "r," her acting was mechanical, and the total effect of her personality and her professional proceedings was commonplace. One of this player's readings should be noted, as a token of her peculiar form of intelligence. Instead of the text, "Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion," Miss Mather read, "Poor am I, stale a garment out of fashion."

VIOLA ALLEN'S PRESENTMENT.—THE PRODUCTION AND  
THE ARRANGEMENT.

The presentment of "Cymbeline" which was made by Viola Allen, first at the New National Theatre, Washington, D. C., on October 1, 1906; on October 22 at the Astor Theatre, New York, and subsequently in many cities of the Republic, was the most ambitious, elaborate, and, in some respects, the best that has been effected on the modern American Stage. It had been planned by Miss Allen in a thoroughly conscientious and scholar-like spirit, and it was made with exceptional liberality of expenditure. Miss Allen, however, needlessly dubious of her own judgment, taste, and executive ability, imprudently employed the services of "a producer" in placing her revival on the stage. Amiability, confiding sincerity, and generous enthusiasm are often sadly beguiled by

specious, pretentious, smug incompetence, and one of the prevalent infirmities of American theatrical management is a foolish and provincial deference to anything foreign, merely because it *is* foreign. Our Theatre is populous with English visitors, some of whom,—in their various capacities,—are of the highest order of professional ability, while others are inexperienced, insignificant, or incompetent. The supervision of Miss Allen's revival was entrusted to one of these, Mr. Frank Vernon,—one of those well-meaning persons whose misdirected industry steadily contributes to the calid pavement mentioned by Dr. Johnson,—and by that managerial hack it was so encumbered with superfluous stage-business and so overloaded with finical, trivial, extraneous detail that Miss Allen's courageous, highly conceived, and admirable purpose of fine achievement was, in large measure, marred. It is understood that Mr. Vernon worked with a more or less muddled remembrance of a production of the play which had been made, several years earlier, at Manchester, England, with Mr. Cooper Cliffe as *Iachimo*. So one sheep follows another. But notwithstanding all blemishes,—indeed, in part because of them,—Miss Allen's presentment was eminently conspicuous, much of the acting was exceptionally meritorious, and, therefore, it is deserving of particular description.

The first line of the play is: "You do not meet a man but frowns." The ninth line states that "all is outward sorrow." The tenth line expresses the speaker's conviction that the king, *Cymbeline*, is "touched at very heart." The opening is at Court,—the first scene being a garden of *Cymbeline's* palace. It is made known, in a colloquy between two gentlemen, that *Imogen*, the *King's* daughter, and *Leonatus Posthumus*, his ward, have made a private marriage; that this has been discovered; that the monarch is both furious and grieved about it; that *Posthumus* has been condemned to banishment; that *Imogen* has been imprisoned, under custody of her secret enemy, the hypocritical *Queen*; and that, although the persons of the Court are secretly pleased (*Imogen* and *Posthumus* being generally loved and admired), the time is one of great anxiety and trouble. Such being the situation, the action should begin, as Shakespeare begins it, gravely and simply. In this production it began with a game of bowls,—introduced, apparently, because *Cloten* and his attendants speak of such a game at the beginning of the Second Act of the original play. Bowls was a popular game in Shakespeare's time, but it was unknown in that of *Cymbeline*: it has not been traced back beyond the twelfth century. As an expedient to begin this play it is about as appropriate, under



the distressing circumstances known to exist, as a five-o'clock afternoon English "tea" would be, or a London garden party. When that ridiculous pastime ceased (and it seemed to end only because a mischievous boy, somewhere in the neighborhood, had blown a toy trumpet), the joyful assemblage dispersed and the dialogue was allowed to proceed,—though not without impediment; for two pedestrians presently strolled across the scene, for no obvious reason except that they might disturb the colloquy and distract attention from it. The treacherous *Queen* has brought *Imogen* and *Posthumus* together, in order to incense the angry monarch still further against *Posthumus*; and, by murmuring, aside, "I'll move him to walk this way," she plainly intimates that the *King* is in another part of the garden: yet, after she had departed, to "move" him, that exasperated potentate suddenly projected himself upon the scene, armed with a tremendous spear,—as if he were going to prod for eels,—and attended by retainers, also bearing spears; in fact, a sporting party. *Ex pede Herculem!* Throughout the representation that method of treatment prevailed,—the commonplace method, which strives to familiarize a poetic drama by investing it with something that is called "atmosphere" and making it supposed to be "natural." The wonder is that *Cymbeline* did not enter

in an automobile and *Posthumus* drive away in a taxicab. Things of this kind, it should be remembered, are not devised by actors, but by meddlesome, incompetent stage directors. Later in the performance *Iachimo* picked up a letter that *Posthumus* had dropped, and read it, and sneered over it; *Cloten* played tag with a wet pocket handkerchief; *Imogen* was employed in weaving a blanket; *Posthumus* and *Philario* tossed a flagon; "the scriptures of the loyal Leonatus" appeared in the form of a wad of scrolls, having the size and appearance of a pound of candles: and *Posthumus* was made to go into battle dressed in something resembling a lady's waterproof rain cloak.

No practice could be more injudicious than that which overloads a poetical play with prosaic trappings; encumbering its scenes with fabrics imitative of the furniture of "the period"; impeding with litter the movements of the actors; saddling them with domestic implements; and obscuring movement and meaning with rubbish, whether archæological or "natural." In the set at *Philario's* house,—which, mechanically, seemed to have been made not with the view to favor dramatic action, but for the purpose of trying to show how the Romans furnished their abodes,—the actors were huddled within a small apartment, so littered with furniture that no one of

them could move about in it without imminent danger of collision, and so dark that scarcely anything could be discerned of their facial expression. There the wager had to be made,—the expedient that is the pivot of the play; there *Iachimo* had to tell, and act, his series of subtle and specious lies; and there *Posthumus* had to show his frenzy, and utter his terrible invective on the falsehood of women and of the maligned *Imogen*. The stage, obviously, should be clear, and the light should be brilliant; but those scenes were overloaded with accessories, and, practically, placed in almost the dark. The second of them began with a gross absurdity,—*Philario* and *Posthumus* being “discovered,” at play, with *dice*. *Posthumus*, at this time, is poor, dependent on the bounty of *Philario*, and having nothing to stake; and also *Posthumus* is unhappy, has entered into a degrading wager respecting his wife’s chastity; moreover, that chastity is the subject of his conversation with *Philario*, when they are thus set down at the dice-board! In even worse taste, if possible, was the “business” subsequently allotted to *Iachimo*, who, in the midst of his infamous and dangerous avowal of success with *Imogen*, turned his back on *Posthumus*, the husband, and devoted his attention to the eating of grapes,—probably because it was remembered that Henry Irving ate grapes, when he played *Iago*, to



the *Othello* of Edwin Booth. Such gratuitous ineptitude is exasperating in its folly. The right way is to use those things—and those things only—which help to create and sustain illusion. Other adjuncts are needless. If half the attention were given to Acting that is wasted on historical gimcracks the Stage would better serve its legitimate purpose and the public mind would be better instructed. In this production, at a vitally important moment, when *Pisanio* is declaring steadfast loyalty to *Posthumus*, a young woman, arrayed in fluttering drapery, flitted over the scene, and accosted the *Queen*, in dumb show, causing the audience to look away from the speaker and entirely to miss the sense of his words: and during the essential colloquies between *Iachimo* and *Posthumus*, concerning the wager, *Philario* distracted the observer's attention and marred the dramatic effect by wabbling about as if he were afflicted with fleas, adjusting his fillet, and punctuating the air with inane gesticulation. "In a theatre," said Joseph Jefferson, "the eye is an absolute tyrant, and therefore it is a principle of art that while one actor is speaking the others must remain still." "The besetting sin of actors," said Henry Irving, "is anticipation—the neglect to wait for cues and to take time in acting." These, perhaps, are little things; but it is of little things that great things

are made,—and it is by little things that great things are often marred.

The scenery, especially that representative of the mountains of Wales, was uncommonly handsome and extremely effective; but it was obviously new, and, like so much of the scenery usually painted by American artists, it lacked mellowness of tone. The Welsh mountains, in fact, are rugged and dark. The presence of heather on them would not account for the peculiar, almost tropical, color chosen. The painted mountains were more suggestive of Arizona and California than they were of Wales. The costumes, in general, were seen to have been selected not with reference to their suitability to the persons in the play,—each of whom would, of course, manifest individuality in the choice of fabrics and colors,—but in accordance with a design of showing, assumptively, “the dress of the period.” The costume of *Cymbeline* made him ludicrous. *Iachimo*, in the Chest Scene, was invested with an obstructive scarlet robe, such as Henry Irving wore when he acted *Mephistopheles*: he should wear black. *Posthumus* was dressed in “baby blue” and so encumbered with drapery that he could scarcely use his arms or his weapons. *Cloten* was made to wear a bright green tunic; a salmon pink cloak; gray trousers, made like bags; red shoes; red cross garters, and gold and tur-

quoise ornaments; and, though red hair is correct for him, yet, in this monstrous costume, his staring red hair and red mustache made him a freak. The only dresses in the production that were nearly appropriate, in either fabric or color, were those worn by Gilmour as *Iachimo*. Thomas Hazelwood was named as the designer of the dresses: if they fairly denoted his judgment and taste he clearly had mistaken his vocation.

The pervasive defect of the production was elaborate realism. A serious effort was made. Much care had been taken. Much labor had been employed. But the forces had lacked intelligent, competent direction. Since the play of "Cymbeline" is a poetic romance, it ought to be displayed and illustrated in a poetic manner. The vagaries of fiction should not be treated as solemn facts. The story moves upon the ground, but, far more largely, it moves in the realm of imagination. There is no need of excessive, minute "manners and customs" in the stage treatment of such plays as "Cymbeline," "Hamlet," "Macbeth," and "King Lear." Cromlechs, artiums, Druid circles, and Roman temples are subsidiary matters. The stage cannot reproduce either the Rome of Augustus or the England of Julius Cæsar; it is enough that those things be suggested. The method that was followed, under Mr. Vernon's misguided



direction of Miss Allen's lavishly made production, was that of fat-witted pedantry. The measurable redemption of the revival was due chiefly to the acting.

THE PERSONATIONS:—MISS ALLEN AS *IMOGEN*.

Viola Allen had long been known as an actress of strong character; tender heart; acute sensibility; absolute, because natural, refinement, and essentially feminine loveliness. It was inevitable that, having once entered the Shakespearean realm (which she did with a production of "Twelfth Night," in 1904), she should wish to act *Imogen*. No other character in Shakespeare would suit her so well; for the appeal of every womanly quality in *Imogen's* nature finds an instant response in her own. Sweetness of temperament; purity of life; the dignity of virtue; the scorn of vice; a noble passion of vilified honor; the grief of a cruelly wounded heart; fortitude; grace; wistful, childlike, winning simplicity,—those were clearly defined attributes to her performance, and, by her practised, unobtrusive art, those attributes were blended into a sympathetic personification of chaste, innocent, excellent womanhood. Her conquest of her audience was complete. Her performance was not a perfect one, but she revealed a charming ideal in

a charming manner, giving natural embodiment to the most endearing and the most adorable of Shakespeare's women; and so she crowned with honor a long career of earnest endeavor and worthy achievement. In its representative aspect of womanhood Miss Allen's impersonation of *Imogen* was the best portrayal of character, mind, and soul that she ever gave. In its quality, and at points in its execution, there was room for improvement; but, as a whole, it was a triumph for the actress and a delight for the community.

The public gain, in seeing a true, and therefore impressive, satisfying performance of *Imogen* consists in having a surpassingly beautiful poetic ideal of womanhood transmuted into a living image of beauty, sensible to the vision, sympathetic with the feelings, and instantly appreciable by the mind. *Portia* is beauteous, generous, arch, blithe, loving, and winning; *Rosalind* is noble, free, gay, sparkling, merry, a creature of enchantment; *Beatrice* is the personification of piquant brilliancy; *Viola* is romantic, gentle, tender, and lovely; *Cordelia* is embodied fidelity; *Perdita* is the sunshine of youth, love, and joy; but *Imogen*, the true wife, the passionate lover, the imperial princess, the magnanimous, patient, devoted, pathetic heroine, whom no hardship can subdue and no injustice pervert, unites all the qualities

that are fascinating and worshipful in a woman. It is no slight task to act such a part: it is a permanent honor to act it well. Miss Allen was beautiful to see and sweet to hear. The personality, suffusing the art, was that of a pure, gentle, amiable, ingenuous, confiding girl. Placidity is one of the chief characteristics of this actress, and refined domesticity is a condition closely congenial with her temperament. She speaks earnestly; awakens sympathy; inspires kindly solicitude, and stimulates a feeling of protective regard. No spectator of her performance of *Imogen* could fail to discern in it, and to appreciate, the charm of a good and lovable nature. In *Imogen's* affliction, on being cruelly parted from her husband, the actress might well have been less inert; it is her peculiarity to be sometimes inexpressive where feeling is to be shown by condition and aspect, and not by explicit action; but in the rebuke of *Cloten* she flamed into life and in the repulse of *Iachimo* she splendidly expressed the shrinking alarm of startled delicacy, the amazement of insulted royalty, and the fiery indignation and withering scorn of offended virtue. In the reception of the letter from *Posthumus*, appointing the tryst at Milford Haven, she became the vital, sparkling embodiment of hope and happiness, and at that moment was indeed *Imogen*. Upon *Pisanio's* revela-



tion of the murderous message from *Posthumus* she rose to an eminence of passionate grief—and also of exemplary fortitude. At the mouth of the Cave she deftly used the business of trepidation and assumed valor that has been customary on the stage ever since it was invented by Helena Faucit; and throughout the Cave scenes she was exceedingly pretty and winning, now wistful and now blithe,—alternating, in mood, between assumed glee and irresistible melancholy. To the frantic outburst over the headless body, which *Imogen* supposes to be that of *Posthumus*, she was not entirely equal; but her revealment of *Imogen's* grief, combined with her forlorn effort to submit, was inexpressibly pathetic. Her acting, at all times, has shown more heart than imagination; at that point her heart was deeply touched. The signal notes of feeling that she squarely struck and clearly sounded, in *Imogen*, are those of exuberant joy and despairing sorrow. The exceptional condition,—the personal superiority,—of *Imogen* was not at all times positively denoted by her. The intrinsic glory that the performance somewhat lacked is that of Ideality,—the ineffable magic that illumines and hallows all the rest. The imagination of *Imogen* rises high and travels far. “Hath Britain *all* the sun that shines?” The temperament of *Imogen* is that of tremulous impetuosity, scarcely restrained by self-

control, and therefore the involuntary manner of *Imogen* is swiftly apprehensive, eager, and alert. One of her most self-illuminating speeches is the one that begins with "O for a horse with wings." *Imogen* should not be placed at a tambour: a poetic heroine must not darn the family stockings. Nothing about *Imogen* is in the least suggestive of that domestic, fireside, angelical paragon who is mentioned, in a dreadful couplet by the poet Wordsworth, as "a creature not too bright and good for human nature's daily food": nor should there ever be occasion for the spectator, gazing to satiety on superabundant, placid rectitude, to murmur, with Tom Moore,

"Be an angel, my love, in the morning,  
But O, be a woman to-night!"

But when every critical reservation has been made that the severest canons of judgment would enforce (the judgment which every sincere artist desires and seeks) Viola Allen's assumption of *Imogen* must justly be placed among the best histrionic achievements of the American Theatre of recent years,—a sweet, pure, sympathetic, lovable interpretation of an exquisite woman. The dignity of her character, the sincerity of her mind, the unquestionable truth and depth of her devotion to Dramatic Art (devotion which has again and again been exemplified in



From Photographs by Otto Sarony Company

VIOLA ALLEN AS IMOGEN, IN "CYMBELINE"

*"Send your trunk to me; it shall safe be kept,  
And truly yielded you."*

ACT I., Sc. 6

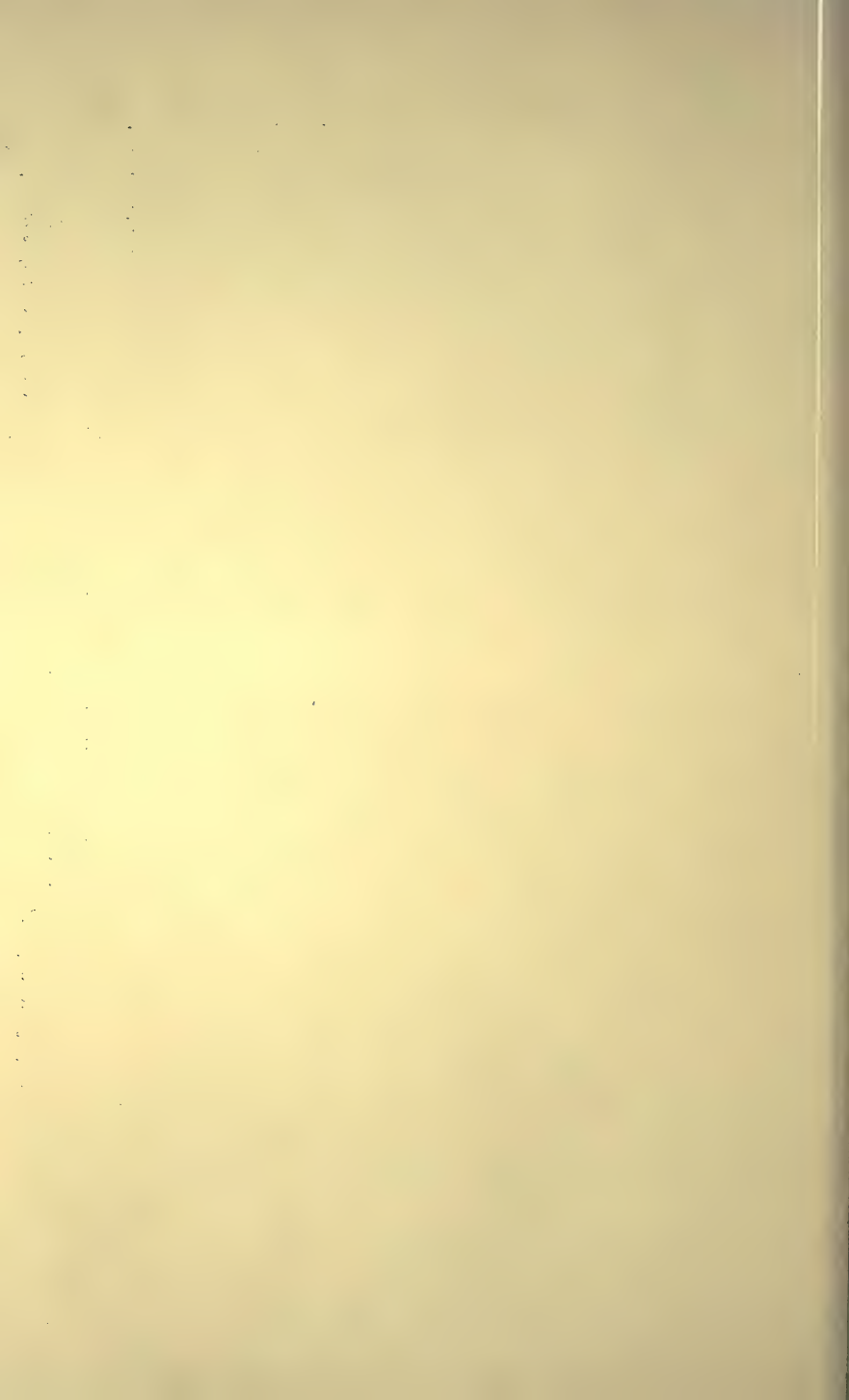


Author's Collection

*"Ho! who's here?  
If anything that's civil, speak; if savage,  
Take or lend!"*

ACT III., Sc. 6





material sacrifices such as, among players of the present halcyon and superior period, are, as a rule, theoretical only!), and her ample professional experience concurred to justify and require estimate of her achievement as exceptional and of enduring value. An actress whose range of delineations comprehends with facility such sharply contrasted parts as *Glory Quayle*, in "The Christian," and *Virginia; Lydia Languish*, in "The Rivals," and *Hermione; Dolores*, in "The Palace of the King," and *Perdita; Roma*, in "The Eternal City," and *Imogen*; an actress who has played all those parts—among many others—adequately and some of them superbly well, is one of rare powers and noble achievement, entirely worthy of recognition and high respect as one of the leaders and dignitaries of the Stage in her time:

Compact of innocence, that fears no harm,  
And girlish glee, that only glows to charm,  
Ingenuous goodness, that is never tame,  
And ardent passion, ignorant of shame,  
She wins our love by no deceptive lure—  
Her mind is noble and her heart is pure.  
Sincerity, in every look and tone,  
Reveals her soul and marks her for its own.  
Various her art, but never in extreme,  
Earnest to be, and not content to seem,  
It holds our feelings in a willing thrall—  
The perfect woman shining through it all.

JOHN H. GILMOUR AS *IACHIMO*.

John H. Gilmour, a talented, experienced, versatile actor, long since retired from the Stage, presented *Iachimo* as a light, self-complacent, ironical villain, apt with cynical sneer, and blandly specious; with but a faint show of subtlety and with no special attempt at contrasts of characterization. His assumed abstraction, in the Temptation Scene with *Imogen*, and his instantaneous change from duplicity to buoyant, joyous candor, when the wily traitor, by his sudden, eloquent praise of *Posthumus*, deceives the *Princess* (against her woman instinct), were the finest strokes of his art, and in the right vein. His main design appeared to intend the general effect of cool confidence and gay plausibility. In making the wager he had no doubt that he should win it; in *Imogen's* chamber, no fear of being discovered; in lying to *Posthumus*, no tremor of doubt that his lies would prevail. His *Iachimo* was a smooth, smiling, easy-going, man-of-the-world rascal. He played the part clearly, from his chosen point of view, and gave an effective performance, under seriously disadvantageous conditions. In the Chamber Scene, for example,—which scene, dramatically, is the best scene of all, when done according to Shakespeare,—this *Iachimo* had to emerge from a small, squat box, cov-



ered with hides, instead of a long, iron-bound wooden trunk, which would be correct. That box was placed close to the footlights; and, after the actor had emerged from it without causing laughter (which, greatly to the credit of his skill, he was able to do), he had to look for *Imogen*, whom presently he found, elevated on a bier-like structure, in an alcove, at the back of the stage, illuminated with a blue light that made her look like a corpse. He then had to walk around the bier, and to hover over it, in order to obtain the bracelet and observe the mole. Much of the time his back was turned toward the audience, so that the expression of his face could not be seen; and for, apparently, that same reason he was compelled to speak aloud,—and thus to ruin its effect,—the soliloquy that ought to be uttered in a deep, thrilling whisper. The chamber of *Imogen*, which, according to the dramatist's description, should be "hanged with tapestry of silk and silver," was painted to resemble stone, and was provided with one small piece of tapestry, which *Iachimo* had to pull down and examine,—making, as he did so, a noise with ropes and pulleys that, inevitably, would have roused the sleeper,—of whom it is made known that, for a long time, she had been harassed with insomnia or with fearful dreams. The concealed presence of an intruder in her bedroom, though

unsuspected, would, to such a woman as *Imogen*, be quite sufficient to cause vague apprehension in her mind and uneasy motion in her restless body; yet, in order to cause such a motion, and in that way to startle *Iachimo*, recourse was had to the commonplace expedient of the clashing of armor, outside.

The fact that Gilmour was able to hold an audience in suspense, under conditions so destructive of illusion, afforded decisive testimony to his sterling talent. He omitted the closing words of *Iachimo's* soliloquy,—the half triumphant, half apprehensive exclamation, "Time, time, time!" as the distant clock strikes three, and the miscreant closes the lid. Those words are essential, and they ought to be spoken in a grim, thrilling whisper. Gilmour made a wholly unwarranted effort in the line of extenuation of *Iachimo*, by causing him, on returning into the chest, to speak the words, "Though this a heavenly angel, hell is here," as if he were already suffering remorse; it is obvious that, if he were, he would not,—as he does,—pursue his wicked purpose to the bitter end. All that he means is what he says: "I lodge in fear."

After the chest exit a drop descended, and then it was almost immediately raised, revealing the same room, except that an iron grill, at the back, had been closed in front of *Imogen's* bed. To that room

*Cloten* entered with his tipsy companions; the *King* and the *Queen* came on; and the continuing action was thus, practically, made confluent in *Imogen's* bedchamber. The trunk had disappeared,—an implication that *Iachimo's* porters also had free access to her apartment.

JEFFERSON WINTER AS *POSTHUMUS*.

In the version of "Cymbeline" presented by Viola Allen the words of *Posthumus* had been altered in such a way as to deprive him of all verbal means of expressing remorse and repentance in a definite, adequate manner, and thus of redeeming himself from obloquy. The imperatively essential reference to the "bloody cloth" (the kerchief dyed in blood, supposed by *Posthumus* to be the blood of *Imogen*, cruelly murdered at his command) was omitted, while the ensuing speech, which the dramatist wrote as a soliloquy, to be spoken before the battle, had to be delivered by the actor amid such a thunderous tumult and racket of warfare,—the shouts of supers and the clashing of swords,—that scarcely a word of it could have been understood, even if it had been bellowed from the lungs of a Stentor.

Jefferson Winter put forth extraordinary vocal force at that crisis, and he showed the misery of *Posthumus* in his haggard face and frenzied



demeanor. In the scenes with *Imogen* (and it is notable that, although *Posthumus* and *Imogen* are married lovers, they meet only twice in the whole course of the drama) he struck the note of tenderness, commingling affection and chivalry. In the scenes with *Iachimo*, when the wager is made, and later, when it is supposed to have been decided, he denoted clearly the instinctive hostility of *Posthumus* toward the odious Italian; and his culminating outburst of blended grief and fury,—“Is there no way,” etc.,—had the necessary wildness and disjointed utterance of an overwhelming passion. Excessive solicitude on the part of an actor often will cause him to try to do too much; in this instance it impaired the proportion and lessened the weight of the performance, but it did not detract from its correctness of ideal, its deep feeling, its distinction, or its force. The actor managed the text with discretion, delicacy, and taste,—speaking offensive lines in such a way as to gloss over their coarseness, without sacrifice of their dramatic effect.

#### OTHER CHARACTERS AND PERSONATIONS.

The absence of certain virtues in a performance of *Pisanio* would at once be perceived, and would be deplored; the presence of those virtues is agreeably

felt, without always being specifically noticed. *Pisanio* occupies a subsidiary position in the story, but he is a character of superlative importance. He was acted, in Miss Allen's production, in a grave, gentle, lovely spirit of affection and fidelity, by Fuller Mellish, an actor of the old school, whose presence, in any representation, is a blessing. Almost every particle of the "business" or byplay used by this actor helps his associate actors, while expressing his own character, and, whether it be prose or verse, he speaks with fine intelligence, just emphasis, and a round, clear, copious delivery. The part of *Pisanio* was elevated by him into unusual distinction.

Sidney Herbert, an actor of exceptional talent (he gave the best *first* performance of *Shylock* ever witnessed by me), could have injected into his personation of *Cloten* the necessary element of characteristic spleen and braggart menace, conveying a sense of intrinsic malice. He presented the part as a mixture of such persons as *Osrice*, *Oswald*, *Bobadil*, and *Sir Frederick Blount*,—a pert, gasconading donkey. On going to the fight, off the scene, he made a farcical exit, while the stage business was so arranged as to make the brave *Guiderius* appear capable of the meanness of killing an unarmed antagonist.

The *King* and the *Queen*, in this drama, are useful, but they attract less attention than is usually

accorded to royal persons. Alison Skipworth placed emphasis on the speciousness and malevolence of the *Queen*; not at all on her intellectual and formidable character. Henry Hadfield, who acted *Cymbeline*, brought to that somewhat thankless part the virtues of sincerity, gravity, and weight. He is an actor of experience and solid worth. It was a pleasure to see the veteran Charles Leslie Allen in the character of *Belarius*,—a part for which he had the essential feeling,—the sentiment, the benignity, the sweetly reminiscent tone,—though not the bluff, martial power.

For purposes of record the full cast is appended here:

<i>Cymbeline</i> .....	Henry J. Hadfield
<i>Cloten</i> .....	Sidney Herbert
<i>Posthumus Leonatus</i> .....	Jefferson Winter
<i>Belarius</i> .....	C. Leslie Allen
<i>Guiderius</i> .....	Douglas Gerard
<i>Arviragus</i> .....	Frederick Rowland
<i>Pisanio</i> .....	Fuller Mellish
<i>Cornelius</i> .....	G. D. Winn
<i>First British Lord</i> .....	Lionel Hogarth
<i>Second British Lord</i> .....	Leopold Lane
<i>First British Captain</i> .....	C. H. Bates
<i>Second British Captain</i> .....	George Sheldon
<i>Attendant</i> .....	William Fiske
<i>A Druid</i> .....	R. M. Dolliver
<i>A Frenchman</i> .....	Morgan Thorpe
<i>Iachimo</i> .....	J. H. Gilmour
<i>Philario</i> .....	Myron Calice
<i>Caius Lucius</i> .....	Burke Clarke
<i>First Roman Captain</i> .....	William Davis
<i>Second Roman Captain</i> .....	P. C. Hartigan
<i>Queen</i> .....	Alison Skipworth
<i>Helen</i> .....	Margaret Montrose
<i>First Lady</i> .....	Ivia Benton
<i>Imogen</i> .....	Viola Allen



## COSTUME.

Trustworthy authority on the subject of costume for the play of "Cymbeline" is scarce. Cæsar, in his "Commentaries," intimates that the inhabitants' part of Britain did not much differ from those of Gaul (France). Strabo and Tacitus confirm this testimony of Cæsar. Pliny says the Gauls and the Britons possessed the art of spinning wool into yarn, and of making and dyeing cloth; that their dyes were of several colors,—purple, scarlet, etc.; and that their cloths were sometimes checkered and sometimes striped. They wore rings on their fingers,—especially the middle finger,—and bracelets on their arms.

A suggestion as to the dress of a British queen is afforded by the historian Dion Cassius, who says that the raiment of Boadicea comprised a parti-colored tunic, in folds; a torque of gold; and, over all, a robe made of coarse cloth; and that she had long hair, falling below the waist. Diodorus Siculus, who describes the manners and customs of the Gauls,—and thus, by implication, of the Britons,—says that they wore parti-colored tunics; checkered cloaks; brass helmets; massive gold chains about their necks; corselets of gold on their breasts; heavy rings on their fingers; bracelets on their wrists and arms; hose on their legs; and, sometimes, belts, made of gold and silver. The same

authority mentions that some of them shaved off their beards, whilst others allowed them to grow; but that persons of high rank and station shaved off their beards and wore long moustaches.

Cæsar mentions that the Britons, when going to war, stained their skins with a dye, called *woad*, which imparted to them a bluish tinge: this must have been reptile-like and horrible in effect, when in battle the warriors cast aside their garments. The geographer Pomponius Mela records that the Britons, in combat, were armed like the Gauls; and Siculus says that the Gauls used a broad sword, called "Spatha," which was hung over the right thigh, by a brass or iron chain: also they used trumpets when rushing to battle, which made a dreadful noise.

The upper classes of the Britons were completely clothed. Loose pantaloons were worn, terminating at the ankle, and high shoes or brogues. The Britons, generally, were tall. Cæsar says they had long hair and that they shaved their bodies, except the head and upper lip.

In dressing this play thoughtful, judicious care should be taken to exhibit rugged splendor, generally accordant with the semi-barbaric character of early British civilization, and at the same time to obtain beauty of picture and refinement of dramatic effect. Correctness is desirable, but it should not be pedantic:

the widest of poetic license is permissible in the stage treatment of a poetic play.

Diodorus Siculus, writing of the Gauls, says:

“They are . . . of a pale complexion and red-haired, not only naturally but they endeavor all they can to make it redder by art. They often wash their hair in a water boiled with lime, and turn it backwards from the forehead to the crown of the head, and thence to their very necks, that their faces may be fully seen.”

This, on the authority of Julius Cæsar, applies equally to the Britons. The sword used by the Britons was often of bronze, as also was the battle-axe or “celt.” The shield was of bronze,—in the earlier period round; in the Roman-British period, oblong.—For details on this subject the reader is referred to “The Costume of the Original Inhabitants of the British Isles,” by S. R. Merrick, LL.D., and Charles Hamilton Fish, Esq., fol., London, 1821.—British Museum.

Polybius, the Greek historian (B. C. 204 to B. C. 122), provides an account of the military dress and accoutrement of the Romans of his time, and it is historically affirmed that the Roman military garb and equipment were not much changed in the course of the century following.

The Roman infantry consisted of the Velites, the



Hastati, the Principes, and the Triarii. The Velites were the youngest men. They wore tunics and partial armor, wolf-skin caps, and sandals. They were armed with light swords and javelins and they carried circular bucklers, three feet in diameter, made of ox-hide. The Hastati were somewhat older men. They wore complete armor made of brass,—comprising breast-plate (pectorale), cuirass, helmet, and (though this is disputed) greaves on the legs, and they carried shields, the shield being made of two planks fastened together with glue and covered with linen under calf-skin: it was two and one half feet broad and four feet long, convex in surface, and furnished with a boss of iron in the centre. The helmet bore three upright feathers, red or black, affixed at the top; and this augmented the terrific aspect of the soldiers. The Hastati carried swords and javelins. The sword had a very strong blade, double-edged and pointed. All the soldiers wore sandals of leather. The Principes were soldiers of full manly age and vigor, and the Triarii were veterans. Both these divisions were armed like the Hastati,—except that the Triarii carried pikes instead of javelins. The Standard-bearers (signiferi) wore the scalp and mane of a lion, on the head and hanging over the shoulders: otherwise they were dressed like other soldiers.

A favorite color with the Romans, for their raiment,

was purple, and of this there were various shades—violet, red, and very dark red: Gibbon says “as deep as bull’s blood.” Any mixture of red and blue was called purple. The Romans derived their fashions of dress from the Etruscans and their arms from the Etruscans and the Greeks. The sandal worn by the Roman soldiers (*caliga*) had nails at the bottom. The cuirass was sometimes made of leather, sometimes of brass. The Roman soldiers introduced in “Cymbeline” should be the *Principes* and *Triarii*, dressed and armed in all their splendor.

#### THE VISION OF *POSTHUMUS*.

Many Shakespeare editors and commentators doubt whether the Vision of *Posthumus*, when in prison, Act V., sc. 4, was written by Shakespeare. Some assert positively that it was not. Dyce says: “That the vision . . . (whencesoever it was derived or by whomsoever it was introduced) is not from Shakespeare’s pen may be considered certain.” The bad style of the Vision and its detrimental effect on the dramatic construction justify this opinion, because, although the colloquy contains a few effective lines, it is weak in conception and poor in language. Positive proof that it is spurious, however, has not been furnished. Fleay remarks that “of

course, the stage directions for the dumb show are genuine,"—meaning, written by Shakespeare. It was Fleay's opinion that *Posthumus* beheld a vision, according to the plan of Shakespeare, and that the text of the speeches, as they appear in the First Folio, was not written by him; that the persons of the Vision did not speak. Knight is sure the composition came from the pen of Shakespeare. Schlegel thinks the fact that *Posthumus*, on waking, finds "a tablet on his breast, with a prophecy on which the *denouement* of the piece depends," is positive proof that Shakespeare wrote the Vision. That, however, is mere nonsense: the "*denouement*" is not affected by the prophecy, except to be retarded, and does *not* in any way "depend" on it: and, supposing the Vision to have been introduced by another hand (which might readily have happened, in the theatre, at a time when Masques were very popular), the same hand might have written the brief passage near the end. The Vision is superfluous to the action, it only delays the conclusion, and, therefore, it should be omitted from the stage version. The stage custom has long been to reject it. Whether Shakespeare wrote it or not, his reputation would have benefited had the whole of it been blotted from existence.



## II.

### LOVE'S LABOR'S LOST.

*"The woman's cause is man's; they rise or sink  
Together, dwarfed or god-like, bond or free:  
For she that out of Lethe scales with man  
The shining steps of Nature, shares with man  
His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal . . .  
For woman is not undeveloped man,  
But diverse: could we make her as the man,  
Sweet love were slain: his dearest bond is this,  
Not like to like, but like in difference. . . .  
Yet in the long years liker must they grow,  
Till at the last she set herself to man,  
Like perfect music unto noble words."*

—TENNYSON.

#### DATE OF THE COMPOSITION.

THE comedy of "Love's Labor's Lost" is believed by several authoritative Shakespeare scholars,—Charles Gildon, Richard Grant White, F. J. Furnivall, F. G. Fleay, Sidney Lee, and Edward Dowden,—to be the first of Shakespeare's original plays. It certainly is the first play that appeared in print bearing his name on its title-page. The date of its composition has not been ascertained. The title-page of the first quarto (1598) specifies it to have been

“newly corrected and augmented by W. Shakespeare”; that of the second quarto (1631) designates it “A wittie and pleasant comedie . . . written by William Shakespeare.” The consensus of critical opinion is that Shakespeare wrote it in or about 1588, and amended and expanded it, for publication, nearly ten years later. “The story of it has most of the features of an ancient romance” (Steevens). “Steevens might have more correctly said that the story has most of the features which would be derived from an acquaintance with the ancient romances” (Knight). “No source of the plot has been discovered” (Dowden). There never was a Ferdinand, King of Navarre. *Ferdinand*, in the play, is indicated as the son of King Charles the Third of Navarre (1361-1425). The reference to a debt of 200,000 crowns, money owed by the *King of France*,—King Charles the Seventh (1403-1461),—to the *King of Navarre*, seems to indicate the time of the story as the early part of the fifteenth century, about 1427-’30. Historical mention of such a debt occurs in the “Chronicles” of Enguerrand de Monstrelet (1390-1453). This remote historic basis of the plot,—if so it can be considered,—was first suggested by Joseph Hunter. The concomitants of the play,—meaning the spirit, the atmosphere, the characters, and the manners depicted,—appear to locate

it in Shakespeare's time. The style of the dialogue exhibits the influence exercised on the author's mind by the writings of John Lyly (1553-1601), whose comedies, seven (or nine) in number, and his "Euphues—the Anatomy of Wit" (1580), were widely known and popular during Shakespeare's youth. Lyly's writings abound in quips and quibbles, forced witticisms and affected phrases. Shakespeare's deplorable propensity to puns may have been derived from that writer.

Dr. Johnson, whose edition of Shakespeare, with that unrivalled Shakespearean document, his superb Preface, was published October 8, 1765, and whose critical views of Shakespeare's plays are, in general, exceptional for common sense, wrote of the comedy:

"In this play, in which all the editors have concurred to censure and some have rejected as unworthy of our poet, it must be confessed that there are many passages mean, childish, and vulgar, and some which ought not to have been exhibited, as we are told they were, to a maiden Queen. But there are scattered through the whole many sparks of genius, nor is there any play that has more evident marks of the hand of Shakespeare."

#### A YOUTHFUL COMPOSITION.

The opinion generally maintained by Shakespeare scholars that "Love's Labor's Lost" was written by Shakespeare in his youth is sustained by this internal



evidence: it treats of that momentous theme, so often the subject of youthful compositions, the Conduct of Life; it is both sentimental and satirical; it assails conventions; it is reformatory in spirit, aiming to set matters right. That kind of zeal is commonly active in the spring-time of the human mind, and it seldom endures. There is no immaturity in the substance of the play, its drift of thought, its assertion that no artificial scheme of frigid self-denial can withstand the purpose of Nature. "Young blood will but obey an old decree." The immaturity is shown in the style, in the frequency of rhymed passages, in the capricious mutations of the verse, and in the florid metaphor and tumultuous sentiment. When completely formed and when exhibited at its best, the style of Shakespeare, while possessing the flexibility of the finest-tempered steel, possesses also its uniform solidity and strength. Much of the language of this play shows a lack of self-knowledge and self-restraint. Parts of the text throb with intellectual vitality. Other parts are labored and prosy. The glittering speech made by *Biron*, "Have at ye, then, affection's men at arms," was, no doubt, inserted when the dramatist "altered and augmented" his comedy, years after his first draft of it was written.

Coleridge provides an instructive comment on the composition, as that of a young writer:

"It is not unimportant to notice how strong a presumption the diction and allusions of this play afford that, though Shakespeare's acquirements in the dead languages might not be such as we suppose in a learned education, his habits had nevertheless been scholastic and those of a student. For a young author's first work almost always bespeaks his recent pursuits; and his first observations of life are either drawn from the immediate employments of his youth and from the characters and images most deeply impressed on his mind in the situation in which those employments have placed him, or else they are fixed on such objects and occurrences in the world as are easily connected with, and seem to bear upon, his studies and the hitherto exclusive subjects of his meditations."

#### THE PLOT.

The story of "Love's Labor's Lost" is romantic, facetious, and pleasing, but the play is deficient of interesting incident and in the development of its plot the essential element of Action is subordinated to the ingredients of poetry and humor. *Ferdinand, King of Navarre*, and his three noble comrades, *Biron, Longaville*, and *Dumain*, dedicate themselves, for a term of years, to seclusion and study. They are to dwell alone; to be frugal and vigilant; to refrain from the society of women; to be temperate, placid, chaste, and cold: in a word, to be dedicated to Mind. The *King*, however, is obliged to receive the *Princess of France*, who comes to him as an

ambassador from her royal father, on a political mission, and who is accompanied by three of her ladies, *Rosaline*, *Maria*, and *Katharine*. Those are handsome young maidens, and after they have invaded *Navarre's* serene retreat the four self-consecrated young men incontinently fall in love with them, and each endeavors, privately, to press his suit. All are thus forsworn, and much merriment is extracted from the expedient of making each of them betray his secret to the others, until they all stand together in comic discomfiture. At last the avowal of their error in making a foolish compact is frankly spoken, in words of signal eloquence and beauty, by the wisest and merriest of them, *Biron*, who, from the first, has only humored *Navarre's* caprice for monasticism, but has never believed in its wisdom. Those lovers are much teased and tantalized by the sparkling French girls, when their droll predicament is disclosed, but in each case the love of the youth is reciprocated, and so a happy pairing time is seen to be imminent. Then suddenly comes news that the royal father of the *Princess* has died. There can be no nuptials, for a year. "Love's Labor Is Lost!" The enamored *Ferdinand* must prove his fidelity to the *Princess* by patience. The gay *Biron* must tend the sick for a twelvemonth, and show himself something better than a merry scoffer, "a man replete



with mocks," in order to be worthy of *Rosaline*. The sentimental *Dumain* must languish for the brusque *Katharine*. The buoyant, effusive *Longaville* must curb his ardor and pine for the gentle *Maria*. In the under plot, which is suffused with eccentric humor, the fantastical Spaniard, *Don Adriano de Armado*, held in amorous captivity by the country wench, *Jaquenetta*, affords a broadly comic illustration of the central truth which animates the play: No man escapes from the ordeal—whether it be torment or bliss—of love.

"Nature her custom holds, let  
Shame say what it will."

#### CONSTITUENTS AND MEANING OF THE PLAY.

The subject of "Love's Labor's Lost" is, accordingly, self-culture as opposed to sentiment and passion,—a subject which naturally commends itself to the attention of young men, who, usually, are concentrated on themselves,—and it is one that attracts young authors. That subject is treated by Shakespeare with youthful enthusiasm, but also with the intuition of poetic genius. The idea of natural development which is imbedded in the fabric is sound and true. Mental cultivation is a noble pursuit (so the dramatist, by implication, declares), but the

nature of man is not exclusively intellectual; it is also physical and spiritual; it comprises passions and affections. Love is in the world, as well as Thought, and the right conduct of life will not be ascetic, but free, vital, simple, and happy. *King Ferdinand* and his comrades,—who typify, at first, a favorite theory of youth, namely that of self-conscious devotion to an Ideal,—may seclude themselves as carefully as they please, but they will presently find rebellion in their blood, and as soon as lovely woman comes upon the scene of their retreat,—as inevitably she will come,—their formal and scholastic but tepid, barren, and insincere reserve will be ludicrously broken and defeated. That was all the play was intended to mean, and that meaning it conveys,—intermingled with satire on certain social foibles of Shakespeare's early day,—in a forcible, direct manner, and in a spirit of piquant truth which neither youthful effusiveness nor some tameness of style invalidates. As far as he could go with little experience, in playful exposition of the fevers, freaks, follies, and beauties of youthful love, the dramatist went, in "Love's Labor's Lost": after he had gained more experience he went further, in much the same line,—as the student perceives when reading "Much Ado About Nothing" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

In the latter play, as in "Love's Labor's Lost,"

the humorous persons conjoin to give a performance in the presence of a Sovereign and his Court. In the early comedy there is "The Pageant of the Nine Worthies": in the later and better one there is "the very tragical mirth" of "Pyramus and Thisbe." By those devices the dramatist effected ample disclosure of his eccentric and comic characters. The best part of "Love's Labor's Lost" is the humorous part of it. The rich vein of quizzical humor in Shakespeare's mind and his prodigious vocabulary of humorous words and images begin to show themselves in that play. His intensely English character, likewise, and his bland indifference to accuracy in scholarship,—a qualification which he did not possess and which, apparently, he would not have regarded if he had possessed it,—are conspicuous in it. Every point, however slight, necessarily attracts consideration, in the study of an author concerning whose elusive personality (invariably alluring to the student) the only obtainable understanding is such as can, perhaps, be derived from the analysis of his mind as manifested in his writings.

The intuitive perception of comically whimsical character, the natural faculty for expressing it in concrete forms, and the propensity toward a satirically humorous view of it,—attributes which become more and more conspicuous in Shakespeare's later



comedies,—are denoted in this early one, and they indicate the direction of his mental development. *Biron* and *Rosaline* presage *Benedick* and *Beatrice*. *Armado* is the germ of *Malvolio*. *Jaquenetta* foreshadows *Maria*. *Dull* is an embryo *Dogberry*. *Holofernes* preludes *Sir Hugh Evans*. Some commentators (Warburton, Capell, and Farmer) consider the pedantic schoolmaster to have been intended as a satirical portrait of John Florio (1545-1625), a person contemporary with Shakespeare, who lived in London, taught Italian, and made a dictionary of that language, called “A World of Words”; but that is only conjecture, a mental expedient often productive of error and confusion. Lee supposes that *Holofernes* was drawn from remembrance of Thomas Hunt, a teacher in the Grammar School at Stratford-upon-Avon when Shakespeare was a pupil there. Other persons contemporary with Shakespeare have been mentioned as prototypes of the schoolmaster, among them (by Fleay) Thomas Cooper (1517-1594), Bishop of Winchester,—author of a Latin Dictionary,—and (by Halliwell-Phillipps, disapprovingly) Richard Mulcaster (1535-1611). *Holofernes*, in fact, is a type of ridiculous pedantry, just as *Armado* is a type of ridiculous affectation, pomposity, and conceit; and both of them could have been, and probably were, imagined and delineated without thought

of specific originals. The impression that some of the characters in "Love's Labor's Lost" presage more amply developed characters in Shakespeare's later comedies has occurred to several commentators (among them Coleridge and Augustus Skottowe), and it appears well founded. Furness (the Elder), however, deprecates it, calling it "time-honored," and particularly dissents from the notion that *Biron* and *Rosaline* are the predecessors of *Benedick* and *Beatrice*. That revered Shakespeare scholar, however, concedes as unquestionable that "in the main features of all four characters there lies a certain resemblance." Coleridge maintained that "Love's Labor's Lost" should be viewed as a link between Shakespeare's character as a poet and his art as a dramatist. The excess of rhyme in the dialogue makes the play somewhat saccharine and insipid, but it is redeemed by the sparkling contrast which it presents between images of folly and absurdity and the romantic spring-time loves of handsome, gallant youths and pretty, alluring maidens. The close, with the charming melodies, "When daises pied and violets blue" and "When icicles hang by the wall," is deliciously effective.

## SPECIAL FEATURES AND POINTS.

The scenes which, in representation, make instant and persuasive appeal to an audience are, first, that in which the satirical *Biron*, concealed in a tree, overhears the confessions of his lovelorn comrades and, emerging to taunt them, is himself discomfited by disclosure of his own breach of compact, and, next, that in which the *Princess* and her ladies tease their disguised suitors, when those youths have sought their presence, arrayed in the garb of Muscovites. In the former of those scenes an ecstasy of amorous devotion is shown in the clear light of merciless ridicule, and a comic dilemma ends in submission to inexorable necessity, *Biron* melodiously asserting the beatitude of Love and the righteousness of Woman's supremacy in Love's domain: in the latter scene the airy spirit of coquetry declares itself and exults in frolicsome, piquant raillery. A fine ardor, commingled with a tantalizing disdain, pervades both action and colloquy. The scenes of eccentric humor, involving the broadly comic characters, may be less instantly striking, but they richly excel in whimsical drollery. *Costard* is a sort of *Touchstone*, much wiser than he seems to be or than he would have himself supposed to be, and much can be made of him by an actor intrinsically humorous. *Armado*,



with his ponderous and ludicrous affectation of wisdom, contrasted with the mischievous *Moth*, is a fruitful source of merriment.

The name of *Biron* is spelled *Berowne* in the two quartos of the play and in the First Folio. The accent falls on the second syllable of that name, and that syllable is pronounced "roon." The change from *Berowne* to *Biron* was made in the second folio, 1632,—nobody knows by whom. The name *Boyét* is accented on the second syllable. *Moth* is a synonyme of Mote. The last syllable of *Rosaline* is spoken correctly when spoken as rhyming with wine, vine, sign, etc. *Rosaline* is a dark beauty, and should be so "made-up" by the actress who represents her. The reader of the original play, First Folio text, will observe that in Act IV., sc. 3, lines 296-317 are, substantially, repeated in lines 318-354; and that in Act V., sc. 2, lines 827-832 are, substantially, made to recur in lines 833-879. Those discrepancies are believed to have happened, by inadvertence, when the play was "altered" by the author from its first form. It is one of the many obstacles which usefully obstruct the pernicious industry of those foolish persons who assert the existence of secret cipher-writing in the First Folio text of Shakespeare's plays,—for cipher-writing is vitally dependent on a perfectly accurate text.

## THE TITLE AND THE TEXT.

The title of the play as printed in the first quarto is "Loues Labors Lost"; in the First Folio it is "Loues Labour's Lost." Some later editions give it as "Love's Labour Lost"; others prefer "Love's Labour's Lost." Knight remarks that "The modes in which the genitive case and the contractions of *is* after a substantive are printed in the titles of other plays in the First Folio and in the earlier copies lead us to believe that the author intended to call his play 'Love's Labour Is Lost.'"

The text of the First Folio, following, substantially, that of the first quarto, has been, in modern editions, judiciously rectified of obvious errors and typographical mistakes. The accumulated researches and conscientious labors of many commentators show that the actual, literal, original text of Shakespeare's plays does not exist in perfect condition, as finally sanctioned by him. Heminge and Condell, the compilers and presumptive editors of the Folio, in their Preface to that volume say: "We have scarce received from him [Shakespeare] a blot in his papers"; but their statement should not be accepted in its literal sense. They may have possessed, in a much worn condition; some of Shakespeare's manuscripts or some copies of them, and they may have used as

"copy" some of the prompt-books of Shakespeare's plays, from the theatre,—books which survived the destructive fire at the Globe, in 1613,—together with several of the early quartos. No one knows what became of Shakespeare's "papers,"—or, indeed, of the papers of almost all the authors who were his contemporaries. Some of the early quartos exist, but no prompt-book has been found, nor any piece of manuscript. It is likely that the printer's "copy" which was used in setting up the Folio was heedlessly dispersed and destroyed in the printing-office, after the completion of that work. In those days no care was taken as to matters of this sort.

#### EARLY PRESENTATIONS.—BRITISH STAGE.

When Shakespeare first went to London, 1585-'86, there were two playhouses in the city,—*"The Theatre,"* so called, and *"The Curtain."* They were situated near each other, in the region called Shoreditch. The former, built in 1576, by James Burbage, and managed by him, was the first public theatre ever established in London. A few private theatres existed. When James Burbage died, 1597, his property, *"The Theatre,"* was inherited by his sons Richard and Cuthbert, who demolished the building and with the materials of which it had been composed built the



Globe Theatre, in Southwark, on the south side of the Thames. Shakespeare had obtained employment at "The Theatre," under the management of James Burbage, and there his career as an actor and a dramatist began, and after the death of that manager he continued to be associated with his sons. Most of his plays were produced at the Globe. The first performance of "Love's Labor's Lost,"—meaning the performance of it in its first form, before it was "newly corrected and augmented by W. Shakespeare," for publication, in 1598,—seems to have been given at "The Theatre." Nothing is recorded about the acting of it.

"Love's Labor's Lost" was acted, at Whitehall, London, before Queen Elizabeth and her Court, in the Christmas season of 1597. It probably had been current and was known, because it was not customary to present an untried play before the Sovereign. No record has been found signifying whether it obtained popularity or not. Halliwell-Phillipps and Sidney Lee certify that it did, but without citing authority. Its pertinence as a piquant satire on local, contemporary persons, fashions, and foibles might have commended it to public favor. The public, while it has generally disliked satire and satirists, has always, for a time, followed and favored them. The droll scene of the discovery that all the self-dedicated

male celibates are in love, and the subsequent sprightly colloquies of raillery in which those Spanish wooers are chaffed by the merry maidens of France, would have pleased any audience at any time, and doubtless those merits were appreciated by the gallants of Queen Elizabeth's Court. The play seems soon to have vanished from the stage, and not at any later time to have been much read. The second quarto of it did not follow the first until after an interval of thirty-three years (1631). It was, however, included in the Folio of 1623, with all its textual errors,—which remained uncorrected till the day of Nicholas Rowe, whose edition of Shakespeare's Plays, in which many blunders were rectified, appeared in 1709.

#### AN OLD ALTERATION.

Genest, in his instructive account of the English Stage, devotes a chapter to "Plays Printed but Not Acted, Between 1660 and 1830," and therein makes the following note on an old alteration of this comedy:

"STUDENTS, 1762. This is professedly 'Love's Labor's Lost,' adapted to the stage, but it does not seem to have been ever acted. The maker of the alteration, as is usual in these cases, has left out too much of Shakespeare and

put in too much of his own stuff. *Biron* is foolishly made to put on *Costard's* coat: in this disguise he speaks part of what belongs to *Costard*, and is mistaken for him by several of the characters. The curate and schoolmaster are omitted, but one of the pedantic speeches belonging to the latter is absurdly given to a player. One thing is very happily altered: *Armado's* letter to the *King* is omitted as a letter, and the contents of it are thrown into *Armado's* part. The Cuckow Song is transferred from the end of the play to the second act, in which it is sung by *Moth*. It is now [1830] usually sung in 'As You Like It.' Steevens, in a note on the Third Act of the original play, observes that in many of the old comedies the songs are frequently omitted. On this occasion the stage direction is generally, 'Here they sing, or cantant.' Probably the performer was left to the choice of his own ditty. Sometimes yet more was left to the discretion of the ancient comedians. Thus, in Greene's 'Tu Quoque,' 'Here they two talk and rail what they list.' Steevens gives other similar instances."

#### LATER PRESENTMENTS.

In the annals of the English Stage from Shakespeare's time till nearly the middle of the nineteenth century there is no record of a revival of "Love's Labor's Lost." The comedy was produced in London, for the first time in more than 240 years, on September 30, 1839, at Covent Garden, when Eliza Vestris (Mrs. Charles Mathews) began management of that theatre. The production was elaborate.



The scenery, painted by William Grieve, was beautiful. The dresses, made according to drawings by James Robinson Planché (1796-1880), were rich and handsome. The cast of parts comprised John Cooper as *Ferdinand*, James R. Anderson as *Biron*, John Pritt Harley as *Armado*, George Bartley as *Holofernes*, Eliza Vestris as *Rosaline*, the beautiful Louisa Nisbett as the *Princess of France*, Mrs. Humby as *Jaquenetta*, Miss E. Phillips as *Maria*, and Miss Charles as *Katharine*. The cast also included Robert Keeley, Drinkwater Meadows, and Miss Rainforth. Mme. Vestris was charming as *Rosaline*. George Vandenhoff,—who saw the performance and who was not prone to effusive praise,—writing about her, in 1860, dwelt with enthusiasm on her “attractions, fascinations, and witchery, in the heyday of her charms.” “Self-possession, archness, grace, *coquetterie*,”—so he wrote,—“seemed natural to her. These, with her charming voice, excellent taste in music, fine eyes, and exquisite form, made her the most fascinating actress of her time.” The play was acted nine times, and then withdrawn,—ostensibly because a boisterous public made violent disturbance, in resentment of the managerial abolition of “the shilling gallery,” a favorite resort of “the gods,” which was restored. It appears to have been a failure.

Eighteen years passed before the comedy was again revived in London. On September 30, 1857, Samuel Phelps presented it, at Sadler's Wells (Islington), himself acting *Armado*, in association with Frederick C. P. Robinson as *Ferdinand*, Henry Marston (real name Marsh) as *Biron*, W. H. Williams as *Holofernes*, Mrs. Charles Young (afterward Mrs. Herman Vezin) as the *Princess of France*, and Miss Fitzpatrick as *Rosaline*. Phelps was honored in his time and is still remembered as one of the ablest, most conscientious, most devoted of actors and managers. He loved his art, he labored for its prosperity, and his long career was no less beneficial to the English Stage and public than it was honorable to himself. He bestowed scrupulous care and liberal expenditure on his production of "Love's Labor's Lost," and his revival of it elicited cordial commendation. John Oxenford, writing in "The London Times," warmly extolled the stage-setting, the beautiful scenery,—painted by C. S. James,—and the appropriate and effective costumes and groupings which enriched the embellishment. The play, said the competent critic, as wise in judgment as he was sympathetic in feeling, was treated by Phelps in such a way "as to present a charming picture of a mediæval Court, resting, beneath the shade of the greenwood tree, and by the side of the brook, from the cares and

pomps connected with stately domiciles," thus carrying the observer "back to that atmosphere of sylvan aristocracy of which we may read at large in the 'Arcadia' of Sir Philip Sidney." Another careful critic, Henry Morley, writing of Phelps's impersonation of *Armado*, remarked in it "a certain resemblance to his *Malvolio* [which had been previously seen], inasmuch as these are both fantastical and foolish men." Morley noted "the empty drawl on the word 'love' whenever *Armado* uses it," and "the lumbering helplessness of wit displayed by the great Spaniard, when magnificently and heavily conversing with the tiny *Moth*." Oxenford, continuing the encomium, said that Phelps made *Armado* "one of his choicest comic impersonations. . . . The Spanish head, the manner of dealing with the euphuistic phraseology, the artificial drawl, the complacent good humor that tolerates the impertinences of the *Page*, make up an entirely fresh creation, totally distinct from the fops of stage convention, however it may resemble them in moral attributes."

Robinson as *Ferdinand*, Marston as *Biron*, Williams as *Holofernes*, C. Fenton as *Sir Nathaniel*, J. W. Ray as *Boyét*, Mrs. Young as the *Princess*, Miss Fitzpatrick, "sparkling," as "the laughing *Rosaline*," and Rose Williams as *Moth* are all praised: "rarely



have so many parts been so well played": but the methods of interpretative, expressive art by which those actors deserved and gained such cordial approbation are not described. The play had only a brief run. On October 17, two weeks after its presentment, it gave place to "Othello." A few repetitions of it occurred in the course of the season (1857-'58), and then Phelps dropped it from his repertory. Its later history on the London Stage is scarcely more than a blank. On July 2, 1886, a production of it was effected at the St. James's Theatre, with a cast that included Fuller Mellish as *Ferdinand*, Bernard Gould as *Biron*, R. de Cordova as *Armado*, Elizabeth Bessle as the *Princess of France*, and Lily Belmore as *Rosaline*; and on April 24, 1904, it was presented at Bloomsbury Hall, by members of the "English Dramatic Society." It is included by Charles Edward Flower in his tasteful and useful edition of Shakespeare's Plays, prepared for representation in the Memorial Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon, where annually, in April, several of them are performed.

#### COSTUME.

As there is neither positive historic basis for this comedy nor specific designation of its period, and as,

while naming "the *King of Navarre's* Palace, and the Country near it" as the scene of its action, the dramatist makes not even the slightest pretence of depicting the manners and customs of Navarre, and, furthermore, as the play is intrinsically English besides being a fabric of fancy, no invariable plan can be prescribed as to the manner in which it should be dressed for the stage. It might, with equal propriety, be attired according to the fashions of raiment which prevailed in Spain and France early in the fifteenth century, or according to those prevalent in England toward the latter part of the sixteenth. The former period is that of King Charles the Seventh of France (1403-1461) and King John the Second of Castile (1405-1454): the latter period is that of the closing years of the reign (1558-1603) of Queen Elizabeth of England.

Knight suggests, for the *King* and the noblemen of Navarre, the costume of King Philip the Second of Spain (1527-1598), and for the French noblemen that of King Henry (of Navarre) the Fourth of France (1553-1610). Cesare Vecellio states that some of the women of Navarre dressed in French style, while some dressed in Spanish style, and some in blended fashions of both those nations. Furness considers that "as Shakespeare, in what country soever his scenes are laid, does not scruple to

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introduce the manners and customs of his own time and country, we cannot be censured for following his example, and for clothing a *King of Navarre* and his companions, a *Princess of France* and her ladies, in the picturesque costume of Elizabethan nobility."

### AMERICAN STAGE.

On the American Stage "Love's Labor's Lost" has never been popular. The first performance of it in America of which there is any record was given in Philadelphia, early in 1858, at the Arch Street Theatre. A composition announced as "a new version of 'Love's Labor's Lost'" was presented at Hope Chapel,—a little hall, at Nos. 718-720 Broadway, New York, then called Drayton's New Parlor Opera House and afterward the Broadway Academy of Music,—on November 8, 1859. The advertisement and record of that presentment are misleading. It was not "a version" of Shakespeare's comedy which was produced, but a comic opera, the text supplied by Henri Drayton (who, with his wife, appeared in it), the music "selected" from the works of Balfe, Dibdin, Lee, Hatton, Lover, Donizetti, Verdi, etc. Augustin Daly made two productions of "Love's Labor's Lost," with the following casts:



	Daly's 5th Avenue Theatre, N. Y., February 21, 1874.	Daly's Theatre, N. Y., March 28, 1891.
<i>Ferdinand,</i>	D. H. Harkins.	John Drew.
<i>Biron,</i>	George Clarke.	George Clarke.
<i>Longaville,</i>	Louis James.	Hobart Bosworth.
<i>Dumain,</i>	Hart Conway.	Sidney Bowkett.
<i>Boyet,</i>	F. Hardenburg.	Charles Wheatleigh.
<i>Mercade,</i>	J. Deveau.	Wilfred Buckland.
<i>Don Adriano de Armado,</i>	Charles Fisher.	Sidney Herbert.
<i>Sir Nathaniel,</i>	David Whiting.	Charles Leclercq.
<i>Holofernes,</i>	William Davidge.	Henry Edwards.
<i>Dull,</i>	Owen Fawcett.	William Sampson.
<i>Costard,</i>	James Lewis.	James Lewis.
<i>Moth,</i>	Miss S. Congdon.	Miss Flossie Ethyl.
<i>Princess of France,</i>	Ada Dyas.	Ada Rehan.
<i>Rosaline,</i>	Fanny Davenport.	Edith Crane.
<i>Maria,</i>	Sara Jewett.	Adelaide Prince.
<i>Katharine,</i>	Nina Varian.	Isabel Irving.
<i>Jaquenetta,</i>	Nelly Mortimer.	Kitty Cheatham.

DALY'S REVIVALS.

Daly's first production of "Love's Labor's Lost" was made at Daly's Fifth Avenue Theatre, in West Twenty-eighth Street, near Broadway; his second, at Daly's Theatre, at the southwest corner of Broadway and Thirtieth Street. His first arrangement of the play presented it in six acts: his second and better version condensed and divided it into four; the Third Act, which, in the original, is short (containing only 203 lines), was blended with the Fourth, which is long. Allusion to the death of the *King of France* was omitted. The imposition on the lovers of a penance of one year of waiting for the happiness of matrimony was, impliedly, imputed to the *Princess's* conviction that a prudent delay would prove salutary.

The Pageant of the Nine Worthies was transposed to the end of the last act and it was made to close with "the dialogue that the two learned men have compiled in praise of the owl and the cuckoo" (as *Armado* says was intended), sung by *Hiems* and *Ver*, in tableaux representing Winter and Spring. Dr. Arne's delicious music was used for the sprightly song "When daisies pied and violets blue." The changes were judiciously made, and surely the making of them was proper. Shakespeare left the play in disorder. It appears in the quarto of 1598 without divisions of any kind, and in the Folio of 1623 it appears in divisions which are capriciously made,—not by the author, but by an unknown and, admittedly, injudicious hand.

Daly's two presentments were, scenically, admirable. The first framed the comedy in tranquil rural scenery which really created an illusion of Nature. The persons were dressed in handsome Elizabethan costume. At the close two tableaux were displayed, one representing Winter, the other Spring. The aspect of the former was glacial, to indicate the season, and in it a snow-clad vocalist sang the song "When icicles hang by the wall." The aspect of the latter was brilliantly verdant,—the picture showing a silver fountain, deep vistas of luxuriant foliage, climbing vines, blooming flowers,

mossy banks, and jutting rocks, with shepherd lads and lassies grouped in a radiance of changeful lights.

Neither of Daly's presentments was successful, in a popular sense. The first, notwithstanding the opulence with which the play was mounted and attired and the competent ability with which, in general, it was acted, was made only nine times. It amply pleased the audience "fit though few"; it proved unattractive to the many. The memorable performances, in that revival, were the solemn, grandiose *Armado* of Charles Fisher,—large, broad, stately in style, sapiently absurd and delightfully quaint; the whimsical *Holofernes* of Davidge,—a personation specially admirable for crisp elocution and precise, authoritative execution; the pompous *Boyét* of Hardenberg, and the sparkling *Princess* of Ada Dyas,—a charming embodiment, in which the rosy bloom and affluent vigor of youth were deftly blended with denotement of mature character and royal authority. The *Biron* of George Clarke, in the earlier scenes, was weak and insipid, but later, in the scene in which the lovers confess their infidelity, that fine comedian acted with manly feeling and vivacious spirit. That scene was the one gem of the representation. Two-thirds of the performance was delicious; the rest was tedious.

Daly's second presentment, when the brilliant Ada



Rehan had become the leading actress of his dramatic company, was somewhat more prosperous—though it held the stage in New York for only two weeks, from March 29 till April 11, 1891. A few repetitions of the play occurred in other cities (immediately before Daly took his company abroad, to act in England, France, and Germany), Tyrone Power succeeding Henry Edwards, as *Holofernes*, giving a formless yet roughly humorous and amusing performance. The scenic setting and the dresses provided for that second presentment were exceptionally beautiful. Ada Rehan assumed the royal state of the *Princess* with gracious dignity, spoke the verse, whether grave or gay, fluently and sweetly, suffusing her impersonation with womanly charm and playfully mischievous piquancy. The picture comprising the *Princess* and her *Ladies*, sitting beside the lake, listening to music, was one of exceptional loveliness. The exultation of youth, strength, and joyous animal spirits was suggested, if not fully expressed, in Edith Crane's performance of *Rosaline*. James Lewis was dryly whimsical and quaintly droll as *Costard*. Charles Wheatleigh, an eccentric comedian of the first order (his acting, I remember, in such parts as *Triplet* and *Michonnet* could not be excelled), made all that can be made of the finical *Boyét*. Sidney Herbert, while insufficiently satur-

nine, was comically fantastic as *Armado*, and the solemn *Holofernes* was amply ridiculous in the person of Henry Edwards. The exuberant, sustained vivacity of George Clarke, as *Biron*, delighted his audience, and his eloquent, impassioned delivery of the glowing speech about love and woman fully and finely expressed the ardor of its feeling and the felicity of its words. The performance exhibited great improvement on what it had been seventeen years earlier. The ideal of the character had become definite in the actor's mind, and his manifestation of it was uniform, clear, bold, and vigorous. Remembrance of that judicious cast and of the artistic success which was then achieved justifies belief that "Love's Labor's Lost," notwithstanding its laborious artifice, can always be made temporarily useful on the stage, if attractively attired and competently acted; though the value of it will always consist chiefly in the interest which it is calculated to inspire and sustain as a Curiosity of Elizabethan Dramatic Literature.

### III.

#### CORIOLANUS.

##### THE CHARACTER OF CORIOLANUS.

*"Ambition steeled thee on too far to show  
That just habitual scorn, which could contemn  
Men and their thoughts: 'twas wise to feel—not so  
To wear it ever on thy lip and brow,  
And spurn the instruments thou wert to use  
Till they were turned into thine overthrow.  
'Tis but a worthless world to win or lose—  
So hath it proved to thee, and all such lot who choose."*

—BYRON.

##### DATE OF COMPOSITION,—AND HISTORICAL COMMENT.

THE date of the composition of "Coriolanus" is not known, and the principal commentators agree that it is indeterminate. "We are destitute of all evidence on the point," says Collier. The style of it sufficiently determines that it was one of Shakespeare's later works. Malone, a careful investigator, concluded that he wrote it in 1610. It was first published in the Folio of 1623. "With the exception of a few typographical errors . . . the text is wonderfully accurate," observes Knight. A line supposed to have been



lost, in Act II., sc. 3, was supplied by Pope,—“And Censorinus, darling of the people,”—and this is retained in all editions subsequent to his, 1725. The play is based on Plutarch’s narrative of the life of Caius Marcius, surnamed Coriolanus, which it closely follows. The period of the story is 488 B. C. The historian Niebuhr views the story as fabulous. The action is supposed to pass partly in Rome and its vicinity, partly in Corioli and its vicinity, and partly in Antium. According to Plutarch, Marcius, the Roman General, received the name of Coriolanus, after he had defeated the Volscians and captured Corioli, their principal city. Upon the character of Coriolanus the old historian significantly remarks:

“Marcius was always ambitious to surpass himself, and did nothing, how extraordinary soever, but he thought he was bound to outdo it on the next occasion. . . . He had never learned how essential it is for any one who undertakes public business, and desires to deal with mankind, to avoid above all things that self-will which, as Plato says, belongs to the family of solitude, and to pursue above all things that capacity, so generally ridiculed, of submission to ill-treatment.”

The character of *Coriolanus*, though lofty and noble, is as likely to inspire resentment as to awaken sympathy. It contains many elements and all of them are good, but chiefly it typifies the pride of intellect. This, in itself a natural feeling and a

virtuous quality, practically becomes a vice when it is not tempered with charity for ignorance, weakness, and the lower orders of mind. In the character of *Coriolanus* it is not so tempered, and therefore it vitiates his greatness and leads to his destruction. Much, of course, can be urged in his defence. He is a man of spotless honor, unswerving integrity, dauntless courage, simple mind, straightforward conduct, and magnanimous disposition. He is always ready to brave the perils of battle, for the service of his country. He constantly does great deeds,—and would continue constantly to do them,—for their own sake and in a spirit of total indifference alike to praises and rewards. He exists in the consciousness of being great and has no life in the opinions of other persons. He dwells in “the cedar’s top” and “dallies with the wind and scorns the sun.” He knows, and he despises with active and immitigable contempt, the shallowness and fickleness of the multitude. He is of an icy purity, physical as well as mental, and his nerves tingle with disgust of the personal uncleanness of the mob. “Bid them wash their faces,” he says,—when urged to ask the suffrages of the people,—“and keep their teeth clean.” “He rewards his deeds with doing them,” says his fellow-soldier *Cominius*, “and looks upon things precious as the common muck of the world.” His aristocracy does



*From an Old Print*

*Author's Collection*

JAMES QUIN, AND OTHERS, IN "CORIOLANUS"

*"My mother bows;  
As if Olympus to a molehill should  
In supplication nod."*

ACT V., SC. 3





not sit in a corner, deedless and meritless, brooding over a transmitted name and sucking the orange of empty self-conceit: it is the aristocracy of achievement and of nature,—the solid superiority of having done the brightest and best deeds that could be done in his time, and of being the greatest man of his generation. It is as if a Washington, having made and saved a nation, were to spurn it from him, in lofty and by no means groundless contempt for the ignorance, pettiness, meanness, and filth of mankind.

The story of it is far from being fabulous as it stands transfigured in the stately, eloquent tragedy of Shakespeare. The character and the experience are indubitably representative. It was some modified form of the condition thus shown that resulted in the treason and subsequent ruin of Benedict Arnold. Pride of intellect largely dominated the career of Aaron Burr. More than one great thinker has split on that rock, and gone to pieces in the surges of popular resentment. "No man," said Dr. Chapin, in his discourse over the coffin of Horace Greeley, "can lift himself above himself." He who repudiates the humanity of which he is a part will inevitably come to sorrow and ruin. It is true that no intellectual person should in the least depend upon the opinions of others,—which, in the nature of things, exist in all stages of immaturity, mutability, and

error,—but should aim to do the greatest deeds and should find reward in doing them; yet always the right mood toward humanity is gentleness and not scorn. “Thou, my father,” said Matthew Arnold, in his tribute to one of the best of men, “wouldst not be saved alone.” To enlighten the ignorant, to raise the weak, to pity the frail, to disregard the meanness, ingratitude, misapprehension, dulness, and petty malice of the lower orders of humanity,—that is the wisdom of the wise,—and that is accordant with the moral law of the universe,—from the operation of which no man escapes. To study, in Shakespeare, the story of *Coriolanus* is to observe the violation of that law and the consequent retribution.

#### EARLY ADAPTATIONS AND PERFORMANCES.

When, where, or by whom “*Coriolanus*” was first acted we do not know. The reasonable presumption is that it was first produced, as most if not all of Shakespeare’s plays were produced, after 1598, at either the Globe or the Blackfriars, and that the principal part was played by Richard Burbage, the leading member of the Globe-Blackfriars company. In the original there are many changes of scene, ten of them occurring in the First Act; and because of the difficulty of literal representation this tragedy has



never, except in Shakespeare's time, when placards signified scenic changes, been placed on the stage in exact conformity to the author's design. The expediency of adopting it for use with scenery seems to have been early perceived, and several adaptations of it have been presented and published. A clumsy and coarse version of it, made by Nahum Tate, was acted at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, in 1682, under the title of "Ingratitude of a Commonwealth;" but no description of the performance of it has been found. The bad judgment and execrable taste of Tate are shown in the fact that he makes *Aufidius*, the Volscian general, threaten the ravishment of *Virgilia* in her husband's presence, and causes *Volumnia*, who has gone mad, to rush upon the scene, with the mangled body of her dying boy in her arms, to stab the monster, an introduced character named *Nigridius*, who has broken the child on the rack. In a prologue to this perversion of Shakespeare's noble tragedy Tate says of himself as dramatist:

"Yet he presumes he may be safe to-day  
Since Shakespeare gave foundation to the play.  
He only ventures to make gold from ore,  
And turn to money what lay dead before."

Another alteration, by another somewhat abler meddler, John Dennis (1657-1734), was performed at the

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same theatre, November 11, 1719, under the title of "The Invader of his Country, or the Fatal Resentment," but it was acted only three times. Barton Booth was the *Coriolanus*, John Mills the *Aufidius*, Mary Porter the *Volumnia*. The majestic presence, copious voice, deep, well-governed feeling, and fine elocution of Booth made him grand and impressive as *Coriolanus*. Davies, a good judge of acting, declares Mrs. Porter to have been a greater actress in tragedy than even Mrs. Pritchard. "Her deportment," he says, "was dignified, with graceful ease. . . . She was tall and well shaped, of a fair complexion, but not handsome. There was an elevated consequence in the manner of that actress." She would have suited *Volumnia*.

Still another alteration, made by the eminent actor Thomas Sheridan (1721-1788), father of Richard Brinsley, was performed at Covent Garden, December 10, 1754, Sheridan appearing as *Coriolanus*, and, according to Tate Wilkinson, "conveying a masterly knowledge of the character." This fabric was constructed by incorporating with the work of Shakespeare a selection of passages from an original but feeble tragedy, on the same subject, by James Thomson (1700-1748), the poet of "The Seasons." Thomson's play had, meanwhile, been acted at Drury Lane, January 16, 1749,—Quin impersonating *Coriolanus*

and Margaret Woffington appearing as the hero's mother, in which part she made up with wrinkles on her beautiful face, to simulate age. In Roman characters, *Brutus* among them, Quin was deemed excellent, and probably he was so as *Coriolanus*, but there is no account of his performance.

ACTORS OF *CORIOLANUS*.—BRITISH STAGE.

The part of *Coriolanus* has been acted on the British Stage by many able and distinguished actors, the most conspicuous among them besides Barton Booth, James Quin, and Thomas Sheridan being William Smith, 1758; John Philip Kemble, 1789, 1804-'06-'17; Henry Mossop, 1795; George Frederick Cooke, 1804; Edmund Kean, 1820; James William Wallack, 1821; William Charles Macready, 1831-'33-'38; John M. Vandenhoff, 1834-'38; Thomas Sowerby Hamblin, 1837; Samuel Butler, 1837; Charles Dillon, 1843; Samuel Phelps, 1848-'60; James R. Anderson, 1851; Frank R. Benson, 1901-'10; and Henry Irving, 1901. The greatest success ever gained in this part, on the British Stage, appears to have been gained by John Philip Kemble. The play of "*Coriolanus*" has never been popular.



## KEMBLE'S PRODUCTION.

John Philip Kemble made a stage version of the tragedy, basing it on the Sheridan-Thomson admixture; produced it, at Drury Lane, February 7, 1789, and appeared for the first time as *Coriolanus*, in association with Mrs. Siddons as *Volumnia*. Kemble's *Coriolanus* was considered his grandest impersonation. He retained the part in his repertory to the end of his career, acting it, with great power and effect, on the night of his final retirement from the Stage, June 23, 1817. John Taylor, who thoroughly knew his acting, declared it to be "a masterpiece." "It is impossible to conceive a finer figure for Roman character than Kemble was," says Genest. Mrs. Siddons, as *Volumnia*, splendidly exhibited her surpassing emotional power and at the same time the astonishing freedom and boldness of her art and her intellectual control of it. A letter from the tragedian Young to the poet Campbell provides an illuminative record of her performance:

"I remember her coming down the stage, in the triumphal entry of her son, *Coriolanus*, when her dumb show drew plaudits that shook the building. She came alone, marching, and beating time to the music; rolling,—if that be not too strong a term to describe her motion,—from side to side, swelling with the triumph of her son. Such was the intoxica-

tion of joy which flashed from her eye and lit up her whole face, that the effect was irresistible. She seemed to me to reap all the glory of that procession to herself. I could not take my eye from her. *Coriolanus*, banner, and pageant, all went for nothing to me, after she had walked to her place."

A glimpse of Kemble as *Coriolanus* is thus given by Washington Irving:

"The mob fell back from him as though they had run against a wild bull, as he dashed among them, looking sufficient to beat forty of them, and while waiting for *Aufidius*, at the foot of the statue of Mars [a stage property introduced by Thomson, Act IV., sc. 5], he looked another Mars."

Kemble's scenic setting of "*Coriolanus*" was characterized by classical scholarship and tasteful opulence. The Rome exhibited was that of a much later date than the Rome of the time of *Coriolanus*, when the Augustan splendor of that city had not yet arrived. Among the objects shown was the Arch of Constantine, Trajan's Column, and the Coliseum, things that *Coriolanus* never saw.

Kemble's impersonation of *Coriolanus* evidently was an histrionic marvel. Many judges of his time concurred in commending it, almost to extravagance, but usually in general terms. No recorder (as far as I can ascertain) has described it fully,—with the particu-

larity of specification which such a masterpiece deserved. The nature of Kemble's excellence in this part is, however, to a slight extent indicated by some of the written encomium: it is more largely left to be inferred from what is said of his appearance, method, temperament, and quality, as signified in description of his acting in other parts, or of himself, in private life. The most dominant of his characteristics was intrinsic dignity. His figure was tall and impressive, his demeanor majestic, his utterance (though his voice, while deep, was not 'strong') was clear, sonorous, and sympathetic. He is well described by a German writer, Goede, who, in the course of extensive travels, resided in London for two years (1802-'03) and wrote a book called "The Stranger in England":

"Kemble's face is one of the noblest I ever saw on any stage, being a fine oval, exhibiting a handsome nose and a well-formed and closed mouth: his fiery and somewhat romantic eyes retreat, as it were, and are shadowed by bushy eye-brows; his front is open and little vaulted, his chin prominent and rather pointed, and his features are so softly interwoven that no deeply marked line is perceptible. His physiognomy, indeed, commands at first sight, since it denotes in the most expressive manner a man of refined sentiment, enlightened mind, and correct judgment. Without the romantic look in his eyes the face of Kemble would be that of a well-bred, cold, and selfish man of the world; but this look, from which an ardent fancy emanates, softens the point of the chin and the closeness of the mouth."





*After a Painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, R. A.*

JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE AS *CORIOLANUS*

*"I banish you!*

*And here remain with your uncertainty!"*

ACT III., SC. 3



A pleasing glimpse of Kemble's *Coriolanus*,—but only a glimpse,—is afforded in a letter addressed by John Howard Payne, the actor and dramatist, writing from London, June 19, 1817, to his sister Eloise, in America:

“Kemble, in every scene of the play, sends out a steady, burning light that fascinates you from the moment he appears before you. . . . With Kemble the eye and the intellect are both filled and satisfied: the ear wishes for something. . . . I can never forget Kemble's *Coriolanus*. His *entrée* was the most brilliant I ever witnessed. His person derived a majesty from a scarlet robe which he managed with inimitable dignity. The Roman energy of his deportment, the seraphic grace of his gesture, and the movements of his perfect self-possession displayed the great mind, daring to command and disdaining to solicit admiration. His form derived an additional elevation of perhaps two inches, from his sandals. In every part of the house the audience rose, waved their hats and huzzaed, and at the same time a crown of laurel was thrown before him from one of the private boxes, and he wore the laurel in the following triumphal procession, while the house shook with the thunder of the populace. A similar enthusiasm was manifested in all his future touches throughout the play.”

Payne particularly notes “the electricity of effects” that Kemble as *Coriolanus* caused in his enunciation of “By Jupiter, forgot!” and “Alone I did it!” and by his acting in “the whole of any one impassioned scene of the tragedy.” The *art* of the tragedian specially



impressed this careful observer, who remarked that "Kemble enlarges his legs and arms by pads, and consults pictures and artists to produce personal effects."

It is notable that Boaden, declaring that "Kemble fully shares in *Coriolanus* with Shakespeare," selects as specially illustrative of the "sublime effect" caused by him in that part a passage which was written not by Shakespeare but by Thomson:

"'Tis not for such as thou—so often spared  
By her victorious sword—to speak of Rome,  
But with respect and awful veneration.  
Whate'er her blots, whate'er her giddy factions,  
There is more virtue in one single year  
Of Roman story than your Volscian annals  
Can boast through all your creeping dark duration."

#### VARIOUS PERFORMANCES OF *CORIOLANUS*.

Mossop, it is recorded, astonished his auditors in many passages of *Coriolanus*. Cooke seldom acted the part: it did not suit him and he gained no fame in it. Edmund Kean was too small for it, and he was temperamentally at odds with it, because restless, tempestuous, meteoric, and incapable of the solidity and repose which are essential as the basis of its personation. He used a version of the play containing only the original text, aside from a few changes of

names. "Comparisons are odorous," but there is some sense in the advocacy of Kean, as compared with Kemble, in *Coriolanus*, because Kean used exclusively Shakespeare's text, while Kemble did not, but always appeared in the Sheridan-Thomson variant, emended by himself. "Barry Cornwall" (Bryan Waller Proctor) declared that Kean "failed" as *Coriolanus*. Leigh Hunt considered him preferable to Kemble. Dr. Doran, while admitting that Kean "was physically unfitted" for the part, and remarking that he "gave more pleasure to the followers of the Kemble school by this performance than he did to his own," wrote that "only a great actor could have played the scene of the candidateship and that of the death as Kean did." There never has been any reasonable doubt of the greatness of Kean as an actor, and those general remarks give but little indication of *how* he played *Coriolanus*. He spoke the great speech, "I banish you!" etc., with a "burst of ungovernable fury," which is not the best, or indeed a justifiable, way in which to utter it. On the whole, Proctor's verdict as to Kean's appearance in this part seems warranted. He did not retain it in his active repertory, which, assuredly, he would have done had it been one of his representative performances. Wallack, always a pictorial actor, made a noble appearance in it. Phelps, rugged and forcible, was said by his contemporary Charles Kemble

to be very fine in it, and his production of the tragedy received general and hearty critical commendation. Vandenhoff, the Elder (1790-1861), a follower of Macready, was by some judges deemed next to him in intellect and power. In Roman parts he was declared to be "all but faultless." He was an uneven actor. He would "sometimes perform in an absolutely indifferent manner, and then burst forth with such flashes of genius as at once to astonish and electrify those who had witnessed his former apathy." He was declared to excel "in grandeur of presence and heroic dignity." He gained special fame as *Cato*, *Brutus*, *Virginus*, and *Coriolanus*.

One of Edmund Kean's contemporaries, an actor whom he much respected, Charles Mayne Young, gave a noble performance of *Coriolanus*, and it is notable that he was the first actor on the British Stage to introduce the genuine Roman toga: he wore it in this character, and as *Brutus*. Young was a scholar, and he was scrupulous as to correctness in all things. A later tragedian, William Creswick (1813-1888), worthy to be named in the Kemble and Young group, and also conscientiously accurate in his profession, played *Coriolanus*, 1837, and he was accounted admirable for power, dignity, and fine elocution.—The capital part of *Menenius Agrippa*, the honest, hearty, blunt, affectionate soldier, has been acted by some of the





*From an Old Print*

*Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

**JOHN M. VANDENHOFF AS CORIOLANUS**

*"What's the matter, you dissentious rogues,  
That, rubbing the itch of your opinion,  
Make yourself scabs?"*

**ACT I., SC. 1**



finest of the comedians, among them Dowton, 1804; Munden, 1806; and Alexander Young, 1848.

## MACREADY'S PRODUCTION.

Macready produced the tragedy, March 12, 1838, at Drury Lane (he had previously acted *Coriolanus*, May 27, 1831, under Bunn's management), in a particularly careful scenic investiture, commingling primitive with pretentious dwellings in order to suggest the early Rome of the supposed period, and he impersonated the great Roman warrior in such a way as to elicit a verdict of admiration from many contemporary scholars and critics. Each of the outdoor scenes in Rome contained, in perspective, a view of the stately Capitol. In the scene of the Senate Chamber nearly two hundred senators, in white togas, were placed on three sides of the stage, the most remote figures being those of half-grown youths (to augment the effect of distance), while, elevated in the centre of the back row, the consul, *Cominius*, sat in the curule chair, backed by the emblematic bronze wolf suckling Romulus and Remus, the mythical founders of the Imperial City. In the scene showing the siege of Rome by the Volscians there were moving towers, and the troops appeared to be thousands. A startling effect was produced by the parting of the multitude,



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to admit *Volumnia*, *Virgilia*, and a train of Roman matrons, all in black attire,—a long, gloomy, ghastly procession,—when the mother and wife of *Coriolanus* come to him to plead for the salvation of Rome. One commentator, George Henry Lewes, declares that Macready could not be surpassed in some parts of *Coriolanus*, though lacking the thew and sinew to represent the character as a whole. Another observer said that no actor but Macready could approach Kemble “in the magic power of imposing an illusive image of physical grandeur upon the very sense of the beholder, merely by some slight change of attitude or action.”

### IRVING'S PRODUCTION.

Irving produced “*Coriolanus*” at the London Lyceum Theatre on April 15, 1901, with magnificent scenery, designed by Sir Alma Tadema, and with music composed by Sir Alexander Mackenzie. The notable features of the revival were the scenic sets, the dresses, and the skilful management of the crowds. Thirty-six consecutive performances were given,—the longest “run” of this play ever accomplished,—and, after an interval, one more performance was given, July 20, the last night of the season at the Lyceum. Neither in temperament, style, method, nor appearance was Irving well suited

to the part of *Coriolanus*,—one of his chief attributes being a deep, all-comprehending and embracing *sympathy with mankind* in its every vicissitude of experience, an emotion which *Coriolanus* totally lacks,—and, though he was far too great an actor to be uninteresting in anything, there is no part in which he would have derived less assistance from natural predilection, and his venture in it was a failure, as also was Ellen Terry's attempt to act *Volumnia*. Miss Terry records that on the occasion of Irving's last performance of the patrician general he discarded a beard which he had previously worn, and "for the first time played *Coriolanus* beautifully. . . . Now that one could see his face," she adds, "all was well." Miss Terry's performance of *Volumnia* was, to her extreme disgust, generally regarded as being "sweet." Irving, in conversation with me, linked "*Coriolanus*" with "*Cymbeline*" as a play which, for the stage, "is not worth a damn."

## PLAYERS OF VOLUMNIA.

*Volumnia* has been acted on the British Stage by Mrs. Porter, 1719; George Anne Bellamy, 1745; Mrs. Siddons, 1789; Mrs. Powell, 1804; Mrs. Glover, 1820; Mrs. Egerton, 1821; Mrs. Bartley, 1824; Mrs. Huddart, 1831; Mrs. Sloman, 1834; Mrs. West, 1837; Mrs. Lovell, 1837; Mrs. Warner, 1838; Isabella Glyn,

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1848; Mrs. Weston, 1851; Miss Atkinson, 1860; Genevieve Ward, 1901; and Ellen Terry, 1901. On the American Stage *Volumnia* has been acted by Margaret Cheer, 1767; Mrs. Whitlock, 1796; Mrs. Barrett, 1799; Charlotte Cushman, 1838; Mrs. Flynn, 1838; Clara Ellis, 1844; Mrs. Farren, 1862; Mme. Ponisi, 1863, and Katharine Rogers, 1878.

There is but scant record of Mrs. Porter's career and of her performance of *Volumnia* no instructive description. She was a woman of fine character, and, as an actress, she overcame all personal defects by the energy of her mind and the soundness of her judgment. In comedy she is said to have been "somewhat cold and inefficient." In passionate tragedy "she seemed to be . . . inspired with that noble and enthusiastic ardor which is capable of raising the coldest auditor to animation" (Victor and Davies). She had, in youth, played subsidiary parts in association with the famous Elizabeth Barry. She had been thoroughly schooled in her vocation, and equally by intrinsic power and acquired faculty she was well qualified to act *Volumnia*. Detailed examination of the many and various performances of *Volumnia* is impracticable.





*From an Old Print*

*Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

**WILLIAM CRESWICK AS CORIOLANUS**

*"There is a world elsewhere!"*

**ACT III., Sc. 3**



## AMERICAN STAGE.—EARLY REPRESENTATIONS.

The first performance of "Coriolanus" given in America occurred at the Southwark Theatre, Philadelphia, June 8, 1767,—the Sheridan-Thomson-Kemble version being used. David Douglass acted *Coriolanus*. This actor, who figures in our theatrical annals more particularly as a manager, possessed respectable abilities, and he acted various parts, alike in comedy and tragedy, in a competent and satisfactory manner; but I have found no contemporary records that designate him as in any way extraordinary. His performance of *Coriolanus* is nowhere described. He continued in management from 1758 to 1774, when he sailed to the Island of Jamaica, where he became a judge and where he died. In his production of "Coriolanus" either Margaret Cheer or Mrs. Hallam acted *Volumnia*. Record occurs of only four other presentations of this play in America between 1767 and 1832. On June 3, 1796, it was performed at the New Theatre, Philadelphia, "according to Shakespeare's text": such, at least, was the announcement, but I have not been able to verify the claim, or, indeed, to obtain any information as to the stage-setting or the acting. *Coriolanus* was assumed by John P. Moreton, an American actor (a rare thing in those days, most of the actors being English), who was



highly esteemed: "W. B. Wood, who was familiar with both the English and American stages, pronounced him the best actor of easy comedy he had ever seen" (Ireland). He was born near Saratoga, and his true name was Pollard. He died in Philadelphia, in 1798. No account is given of his *Coriolanus*, nor is he extolled as a tragedian. His associates in the tragedy included William Green as *Aufidius*, Mrs. Whitlock as *Volumnia*, and Mrs. Shaw as *Virgilia*. Mrs. Whitlock, it may be assumed, profited by the example of her elder sister, the great Sarah Siddons. On June 3, 1799, the play was performed for the first time in New York, at the Park Theatre, Thomas Abthorpe Cooper, then only twenty-three years old, acting *Coriolanus*, with Mrs. Barrett as *Volumnia*, and Ellen Westray (afterward Mrs. William B. Wood) as *Virgilia*. There are many contemporary tributes to Cooper, certifying his excellence in various characters, particularly *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Virginus*, and *Damon*, but they contain nothing instructive as to his *Coriolanus*, and again the investigator must infer the quality of the performance from generalities as to the actor's aspect and admitted qualifications. S. C. Carpenter, who saw and knew Cooper and carefully studied his acting, wrote of him that he

"possessed from nature the primary accomplishments of a pleasing actor; a fine person; a voice of great compass, of

most melodious silver tone, and susceptible of the greatest variety of modulation; an eye of the most wonderful expression; and his whole face expressive, at his will, of the deepest terror, or the most exalted complacency, the direst revenge, or the softest pity. His frown in anger was that of a demon; his smile in affability that of an angel."

It would be unreasonable to suppose that Cooper failed as *Coriolanus*, since we know that he was supremely fine in Roman characters,—*Marc Antony*, *Virginius*, and Payne's *Brutus*,—but "*Coriolanus*" was an unpopular play and he does not appear to have retained the part in his customary repertory. The next revival of the tragedy was effected in New York, at the Park Theatre, in September, 1819, *Coriolanus* being acted by James William Wallack, the Elder. This, I believe, was Wallack's first venture in the part; he had not then played it in England, where his career began, and he did not play it there till January 1, 1821, when he assumed it at Drury Lane, in association with John Cooper as *Aufidius*, Alexander Pope as *Cominius*, and Mrs. Egerton as *Volumnia*. His performance is commended only in general terms, but we know that he was one of the stateliest and most impressive of actors, that he could make even *Richmond* (in "*King Richard III.*") a magnificent part, and we are warranted in believing that his *Coriolanus* was noble, pictorial, and spirited.

## EDWIN FORREST.

Wallack was succeeded in the character by Edwin Forrest (1806-1872), who acted it for the first time, May 9, 1831, at the Park,—when he was only twenty-five years old,—and gained in it one of the special triumphs of his professional career. He long retained the part in his repertory and he gained a more substantial fame in it than has been acquired by any other actor on the American Stage. Forrest's qualifications for *Coriolanus*, physical, and, to some extent, temperamental, were exact. His height was five feet ten inches, and he appeared to be much taller, in this part: his figure was robust and symmetrical; his demeanor imperious; his visage dark and stern; and he possessed a magnificent voice, which he knew how to use. He looked like a man capable of doing the prodigious deeds of prowess and valor which are attributed to *Coriolanus*,—of driving his foes before him like frightened sheep; and he seemed no vain boaster, but literally a Hercules of war, when he vociferated

“If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there  
That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I  
Fluttered your Volscians in Corioli:  
Alone I did it!”

In spirit, while he professed democracy and, probably, really believed himself to be a democrat, Forrest



fervently sympathized with the scorn of the multitude that is evinced by *Coriolanus*. He was not a natural aristocrat, but he was naturally arrogant, and in his great strength, equally great self-esteem, and lively, admiring consciousness of the extraordinary talents which unquestionably he possessed, he invested *Coriolanus* with massive self-assertion rather than innate superiority, and with the majority of spectators the former is even more effective than the latter. I saw him act the part on November 2, 1863, at Niblo's Garden, New York. The tragedy was produced with splendor of scenery and richness of costume, by William Wheatley, and with an excellent cast and many supernumeraries: in the last scene of the First Act 154 persons were on the stage. Mme. Ponisi played *Volumnia*, Lemuel R. Shewell *Aufidius*, James G. Burnett *Menenius*, and John McCullough *Cominius*. The performance closed with a tableau showing the incineration of the body of *Coriolanus* upon a huge funeral pyre,—a lurid and imposing picture. This tableau was subsequently, 1875, used by Jarrett and Palmer in their presentation of "Julius Cæsar" at Booth's Theatre, when E. L. Davenport acted *Brutus* and Lawrence Barrett *Cassius*. Forrest's appearance, particularly in the scene of the triumphal entry of *Coriolanus*, returning to Rome after the conquest of Corioli, when he appeared standing in a chariot,

escorted by troops and acclaimed by the multitude, was truly magnificent. In manliness of presence, in contentious deportment, in solidity of opposition, in pugnacious action, in the expression of scorn, and in the paroxysm of explosive rage he was, at every point throughout the play, completely adequate. Like all the personations given by him, however, in the higher range of drama, this one lacked the qualities of refinement and intellectual distinction. "His aristocracy," says his rapturous biographer Alger, "was of the *true democratic* type,"—as if natural aristocracy could ever be democratic! There was in Forrest, and therefore in all his acting, a strong strain of commonness which engendered against him an implacable intellectual opposition that caused continual, often acrimonious, and once at least fatal, controversy; embittered his mind, and darkened his life. All the same he was a great actor within a circumscribed field, and he never lacked either public recognition or lavish abundance of printed encomium. The view of his *Coriolanus* that was taken by his admirers found fervent expression. His intimate and faithful friend William Leggett (1802-1839), of "The New York Evening Post," writing to him, October 25, 1837, said:

"I hope you continue to make yourself acquainted with that insolent patrician *Coriolanus*. He was not quite so much of a democrat as you and I are, but that is no reason why we

should not use him if he can do us a service. I wish Shakespeare, with all his divine attributes, had only had a little of that ennobling love of equal human liberty which is now animating the hearts of true patriots all over the world, and is destined, ere long, to effect a great and glorious change in the condition of mankind. What a vast and god-like influence he might have exerted in moulding the public mind and guiding the upward progress of nations, if his great genius had not been dazzled by the false glitter of aristocratic institutions and blinded to the equal rights of the great family of man!"

This view of Shakespeare is amusing to readers really acquainted with the works of an author who drew mankind objectively and as it is, and whose personal opinions are generally inscrutable; but it sufficiently indicates the habit of thought to which Forrest was accustomed. To him, as to his comrade and mentor, *Coriolanus* was "that insolent patrician," and nothing else, and, as he tediously proclaimed, in his verbose, tumid Tammany Hall Fourth of July Oration (1838), the principal tenet which he affected to hold, *but never practised*, was the demagogic doctrine of "the natural equality of man,"—a doctrine that all observation and all experience have clearly shown to be untrue and foolish. Alger says of his *Coriolanus*:

"The signalizing memorable mark [of the impersonation] was the gigantic grandeur of his scale of being and consciousness. He revealed this in his stand and port and moving



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and look and voice. The manner in which he did it was no result of critical analysis, but was intuitive with him by nature and inspiration. He exhibited a gravitating solidity of person, a length of lines, a slowness of curves, an immensity of orbit, a reverberating sonority of tone, which illuminated the man who, as *Menenius* said, 'wanted of a god but eternity and a heaven to throne in.' . . . The features and contour of the honest, imperious, fiery, scornful, and heroic *Coriolanus*, as impersonated by Forrest with immense solidity and distinction, were simple but grand in their colossal and unwavering relief. Kemble had been celebrated in this rôle: he played it as if he were a symmetrical statue cut out of cold steel and set in motion by some precise mechanical action [!!!]. Forrest added to this a blood that seemed to flame through him and a voice whose ponderous syllables pulsed with fire."

In a more lucid interval Alger added:

"As an antique Roman he [Forrest as *Coriolanus*] had the resentful haughtiness of his caste, but morally as an individual his disdain and sarcasm were based on the contrast of intrinsically noble qualities in himself to the contemptible qualities he saw predominating in those beneath him: and although *this is far removed from the beautiful bearing of a spiritually purified and perfected manhood*, yet there is in it a certain relative historical justification, utility, and even glory, entirely congenial to the honest vernacular fervor of Forrest."

Forrest did not present "Coriolanus" according to the original text of Shakespeare, but used the Sheridan-Thomson-Kemble version, as most of his predecessors had done. In pronouncing the name *Coriolanus* he

placed the accent on the second syllable: Kemble, in England, and Hamblin, in America, customarily placed it on the last two. There is a superb marble statue of Forrest as *Coriolanus*, of heroic dimensions (the figure is six feet six inches high), made by Thomas Ball, now situated, I believe, in the Forrest Home, near Philadelphia.

## VARIOUS PERFORMERS.

Other notable performers of *Coriolanus* on our Stage were Samuel William Butler, Bowery Theatre, N. Y., December 14, 1831; John M. Vandenhoff, Wallack's National Theatre, N. Y., September 11, 1838; James R. Anderson, Park Theatre, N. Y., April 14, 1844; Thomas Sowerby Hamblin, Bowery Theatre, N. Y., October 2, 1849; Edward Eddy, New Bowery, N. Y., May 30, 1862; John Edward McCullough, Grand Opera House, N. Y., December 16, 1878; the German tragedian Ludwig Barnay, Thalia Theatre, N. Y., January 13, 1883; and the Italian tragedian Tommaso Salvini, Metropolitan Opera House, N. Y., November 11, 1885. S. W. Butler (1801-1845), second cousin to Joseph Jefferson, the famous comedian of our day, made two visits to America, the first in 1831-'32, when he acted *Coriolanus*; the second in 1841, when he acted *Hamlet*. His act-

ing awakened no enthusiasm. Ireland records that he was handsome and graceful and a correct elocutionist, but lacked inspiration. He was popular at home, particularly in the theatres of Yorkshire. His epitaph, written by Charles Swain and inscribed on his gravestone in Ardwick Cemetery, Manchester, states that "in him the Stage lost a highly gifted and accomplished actor, on whose tongue the noblest creations of the poet found truthful utterance." J. R. Anderson (1810-1895), remarkable for nobility of aspect, versatility of talent, impressive force, and fine elocution, gave a good performance of the Roman warrior, but he seems to have been more admired in lighter parts, such as *Benedick*, *Gisippus*, and *Claude Melnotte*. T. S. Hamblin (1798-1853) and Edward Eddy (1822-1875) were experienced, competent actors, though not of a high class; there is no authentic record that either of them succeeded as *Coriolanus*. Hamblin possessed the advantage of a formidable, handsome aspect and a manly demeanor, but his legs were inelegant and he did not look well in the Roman dress.

#### JOHN McCULLOUGH AS *CORIOLANUS*.

John McCullough acted *Coriolanus* for the first time in New York, December 16, 1878. He had previously played the part in San Francisco and





*From a Photograph by Sarony*

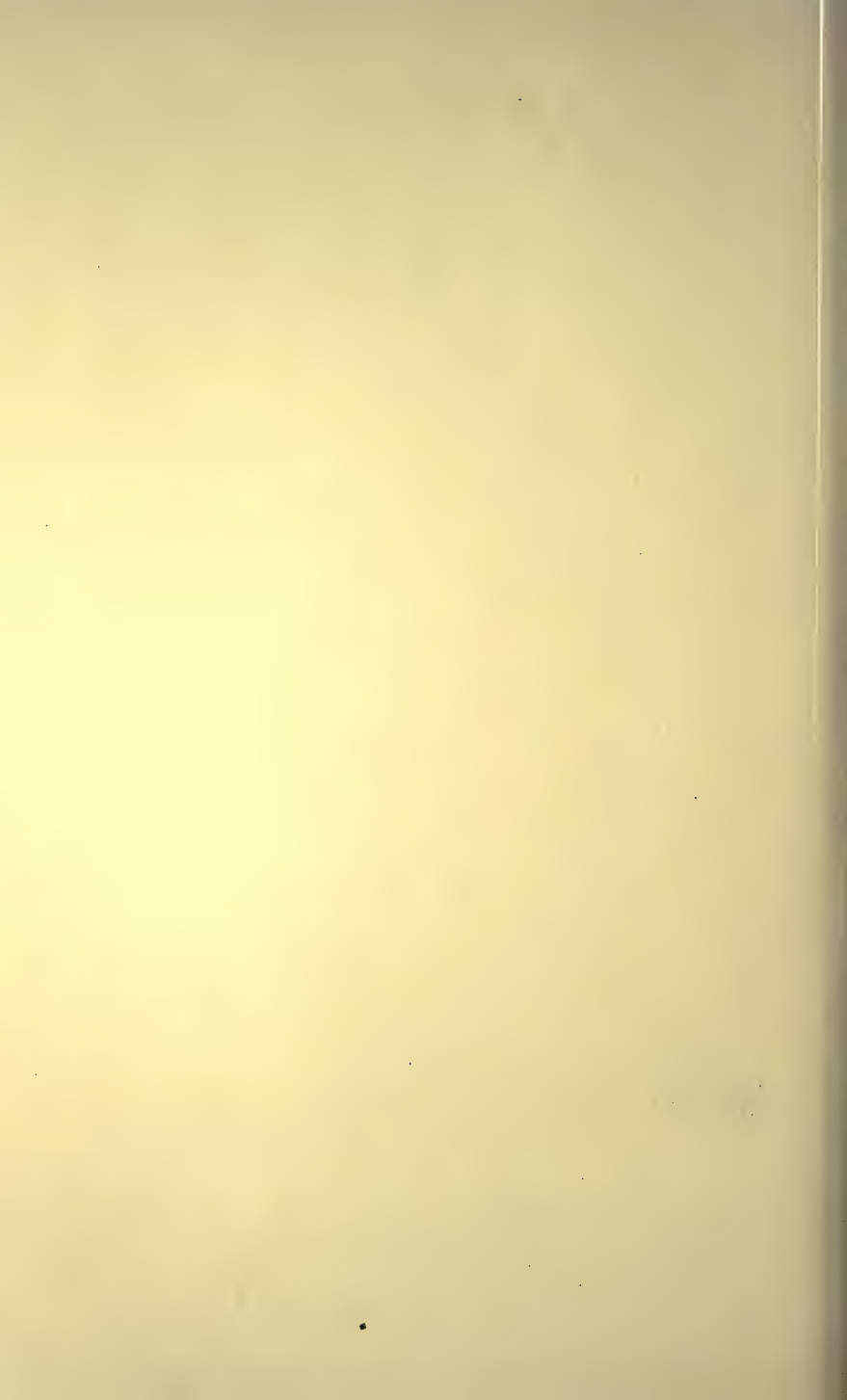
*Author's Collection*

EDWIN FORREST AS CORIOLANUS

OMNES. *"Welcome to Rome, renown'd Coriolanus!"*

COR. *"No more of this; it does offend my heart:  
Pray now, no more!"*

ACT II., SC. 1



other cities. He used, as his predecessors later than Kemble had done, the version of the tragedy that Kemble had made, on the basis of the Sheridan-Thomson adaptation of the original. There is an excess of foreground in the play,—colloquies, battles, processions, etc.,—by way of preparation for the ordeal through which the character of *Coriolanus* is to be displayed, but when Hecuba at last is reached the interest of the situation makes itself deeply felt. The massive presence and stalwart declamation of Edwin Forrest made him superb in this character, but the embodiment of *Coriolanus* by McCullough, while unequal to that of Forrest in physical majesty, was superior to it in intellectual haughtiness and in refinement. An actor's treatment of the part must, unavoidably, follow the large, broad style of the historical painter. There is scant opportunity afforded, in any of the scenes allotted to *Coriolanus*, for fine touches and delicate shading. During much of the action the spectator is aware only of an imperial figure that moves with a mountainous grace through the fleeting rabble of Roman plebeians and Volscians, dreadful in war, loftily calm in peace, irradiating the conscious superiority of power, dignity, worth, and honorable renown. McCullough filled that aspect of the part as if he had been born for it. His movements had the splendid repose not only of great



strength but of intellectual poise and native mental supremacy. The "I must be found" air of *Othello* was displayed, in ripe perfection, through the Roman toga. His declamation was as fluent and as massively graceful as his demeanor. If he had not the sonorous, clarion voice of Edwin Booth, he suggested the tradition of the stately port and dominating spirit of that great master of the dramatic art. He looked *Coriolanus*, to the life. More of poetic freedom might have been wished, in the decorative treatment of the person,—a touch of wildness in the arrangement of the hair, a tinge of imaginative exaltation in the countenance, an air of mischance in the gashes of combat. But the embodiment was correct in its superficial conventionality, and it possessed affecting grandeur. Whenever there was opportunity for fine treatment, moreover, the actor improved it, with the easy grace of unerring intuition and spontaneity. The delicacy of vocalism, the movement, the tone of sentiment, and the manliness of condition,—the royalty of a lofty mind,—in the act of withdrawal from the Senate, were right and beautiful. The physical denotements of mental condition, in the street scene with "the voices," were decisively significant, and there again the actor denoted a fine spiritual instinct. To the situation of the banishment he proved easily equal, giving the magnificent outburst of scorn with

tremendous power; but it was in the pathetic scene with *Volumnia* and *Virgilia* that he reached the summit of the Shakespearean conception. The deep heart as well as the imperial intellect of *Coriolanus* must then speak. It is, for the distracted son, a moment of agonized and pathetic conflict: for McCullough it was a moment of perfect adequacy and consummate success. The stormy utterance of revolted pride and furious disgust, in the denial of *Volumnia's* request,—the tempestuous outburst, "I will not do it"—made as wild, fiery, and fine a moment in tragic acting as could be imagined; but the climax was attained in the pathetic cry—

"The gods look down, and this unnatural scene  
They laugh at!"

#### BARNAY AND SALVINI.

Since the time of McCullough, Ludwig Barnay (1842-19—) and Tommaso Salvini (1829-1916) have been the only representatives of *Coriolanus* on our Stage: they acted, respectively, in German and Italian versions of Shakespeare's tragedy. Both were of noble figure and impressive aspect, and each gave a performance remarkable for repose, dignity, and power: Barnay's was the more pictorial. That actor

had been thoroughly trained and he possessed rare executive faculty. His stature was lofty, his manner magnificent, his countenance of a romantic type, handsome and expressive, with clear-cut features and dark, brilliant eyes. His voice was full, rich, and sympathetic. His method in acting was notable for simplicity. "Out of his element" and vastly over-rated in characters in which he esteemed himself well-nigh sublime,—*King Lear* and *Hamlet*, for example,—he was a performer of the first class in those which lay within his mental grasp,—*Uriel Acosta*, for example, and, in adaptations of Shakespeare, *Marc Antony* and *Coriolanus*. His embodiment of the haughty Roman patrician was massive in form, vigorous in execution, eloquent in delivery, and, in the scenes with *Volumnia* and *Virgilia*, noble and pathetic,—showing the conflict of an affectionate heart with an imperious, arrogant, vengeful will. It is impossible for a thoughtful observer of human nature to deny the justice of the scorn that *Coriolanus* feels for human meanness. Barnay's denotement of that scorn aroused both admiration and sympathy.

Salvini had never acted *Coriolanus* before he assumed the part in New York. He says, in his "Autobiography," that his reason for not acting the part in Italy was that the tragedy "demands too costly a stage setting, and it was impossible to secure in the great



number of assistants *that artistic discipline* without which the grandiose easily merges in the ridiculous," and he adds, with that tiresome patronage and complacent condescension which foreigners so frequently bestow on America and Americans, "I regret this [his inability, for the reasons assigned, to present the play in Italy] very much, as *my compatriots* would have given me an *unbiassed* and *intellectual* judgment of the work." "Othello" and "King Lear" are plays much more difficult to cast properly than "Coriolanus" is, yet Salvini produced both of them in Italy. It is interesting, however, that the illustrious Italian felt constrained to admit that the latter tragedy could be better cast, in the subsidiary parts, in this artistically benighted land than in the Theatre of Italy, which, being foreign, is, of course, so much superior to ours! Perhaps he deemed it inconsequent *how* the play was acted here, assuming that nobody would know the difference. He further remarks that he had been attracted to the study of "the banished and vindictive hero *Coriolanus*" because "I felt that I could divine that character, which resembled my own in some ways, —not, certainly, in his warlike exploits, but in his susceptibility, in his spurning of the arrogance and insolent pretensions of the ignorant masses, and, above all, in his filial submissiveness and affection." His personation, while not extraordinary in comparison with

those with which the American Stage was familiar, was thoroughly good. In appearance he was a huge, bearded warrior, more barbarian than Roman. He had authority, repose, and cumulative force: it is always a comfort to see an actor who can sustain and execute a splendid design, consistently, from beginning to end. That Salvini could do and that, in this case, he did. In the first scene with the discontented, clamorous citizens he delivered the harangue ("He that will give good words to thee will flatter," etc.) in a moderate tone and with almost jocular sarcasm: this, certainly, is not a correct manner, since the spirit of the speech is bitter and the utterance denunciatory. In requesting clemency and relief for the poor man of Corioli, who "used me kindly," he paused when asked for his name, seemed to weaken from the effect of his wounds, and, smiling, smote his forehead and shook his head, as he answered "By Jupiter! forgot!" This detail, entirely correct, was extravagantly admired by some of the actor's idolaters: the wonder is that it should have excited any comment. How any actor could fail to make a fine effect at that point is not easy to comprehend: "The property of fire is to burn and of water to wet," says *Touchstone*. The salutation to *Volumnia* and *Virgilia* was spoken with affecting gentleness: the salutation to *Valeria* was omitted. The denunciation of the Roman mob, "You common

cry of curs!", etc., was uttered with a smile of contempt and with fine vigor. In the parting from his family—"when I am forth, bid me farewell and smile," etc.,—there was deep pathos, as also there was in the outburst of passion, "O mother, mother! what have you done!", in the scene of submission.—The company supporting Salvini spoke in English. *Aufidius* was performed by his son Alexander and *Virgilia* by Viola Allen, who gave a graceful and pleasing personation of that slight part.



## IV.

### A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

*"Well may sleep present us fictions,  
Since our waking moments teem  
With such fanciful convictions  
As make life itself a dream."*

—CAMPBELL.

*"And for my sylvan company, in lieu  
Of Pampinea with her lively peers,  
Sate Queen Titania with her pretty crew,  
All in their liveries quaint with elfin gears;  
For she was gracious to my childish years,  
And made me free of her enchanted round,  
Wherefore this dreamy scene she still endears  
And plants her court upon a verdant mound  
Fenced with umbrageous woods and groves profound."*

—THOMAS HOOD.

ACTUAL, every-day life, in most of its aspects, is dull and tedious. Almost all persons are commonplace and almost all scenes are insipid,—except at moments. Nature will not show herself to you at all times. The glory of sunrise is revealed only once in a day, and even then you will not see it unless you are in the right mood. The spiritual element in

human beings must be awakened before they can truly discern anything. Most persons who have reached middle age know absolutely nothing that is worth knowing except what they saw during the one brief, sweet, youthful hour when they learned what it is to love,—and either to win or lose, it does not matter which. It is the spiritual element that endows man with perception and makes humanity interesting. Common life is sometimes even worse than barren,—because the contemplation of it is extremely likely to engender contempt, often bitter, for humanity, as altogether vacuous, frivolous, and trivial. The realm of art has no room for the commonplace. No rightly constituted mind will ever be contented with a mere map, if it can get anything better. We do not delight in considering what human beings are, in their common state. We know, only too well, that human nature, in its average condition, is disfigured with selfishness, envy, malice, and greed. There is no circle into which any person enters, anywhere, in which, sooner or later, the voice is not heard of censure of the absent, who “are always wrong.” Detraction is universal and it is perennial. The cackle, the babble, of every-day life should never be heard in art. Humanity pleases most when idealized. Shakespeare has endured, and he will endure (not, perhaps, on the Stage, from

which an effort is and long has been in more or less formidable progress to exclude him, as being archaic and not contemporaneous,—which effort will, in my opinion, fail), because, while absolutely true to truth in his representative reflections of human nature, he idealized and transfigured it. This, especially, he has done in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” “As You Like It,” and “The Tempest.”

#### THE SPIRIT OF THE PLAY.

The thoughtful reader of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” as often as he muses on that lovely fabric of a luxuriant poetic fancy, is impressed by its purity of spirit, facility of invention, delicious humor, and rare beauty of diction. The essential cleanliness of Shakespeare’s mind, remarkable when we consider the grossly animal materialism of his time, appears conspicuously in that play. No single trait of the comedy impresses more agreeably than its frank display of the spontaneous, natural, delightful exultation of *Theseus* and *Hippolita* in their approaching nuptials. They are grand creatures, and they rejoice in each other and in their perfectly accordant love. Nowhere in Shakespeare’s plays is there a more imperial man than *Theseus*; nor, despite her feminine impatience, a woman more royal,



more essentially noble, than *Hippolita*. In some old English writings the subject of marriage is treated with ribaldry. Not so by Shakespeare, who could maintain the sanctity and the decency, while he exulted in the passion, of love; and "A Midsummer Night's Dream," while it possesses the rosy glow, physical thrill, and melting tenderness of such compositions as Herrick's "Nuptial Song," is fraught with the moral elevation and intrinsic chastity of Milton's "Comus." Human nature is rightly shown in it as feeling no shame for its elemental passions, and as having no reason to feel ashamed of them. The atmosphere is free, the tone honest, the note true. The felicity of the dramatist's invention,—intertwining the loves of earthly sovereigns and of their subjects with the dissensions of fairy monarchs, the pranks of mischievous elves, the protective care of attendant sprites, and the comic but kind-hearted and well-meant fealty of boorish peasants,—arouses lively interest and keeps it steadily alert.

In no other play has Shakespeare more conclusively shown that complete dominance of theme which is manifested in an artist's perfect maintenance of proportion. The strands of action are braided with felicitous skill. The fourfold story is never allowed to lapse into obscurity. There is caprice, but there is no distortion. The supernatural

machinery is never wrested toward the production of startling or monstrous effects, but it deftly impels each mortal person in the natural line of human development. The dream-spirit is consistently maintained. The dramatist was living, thinking, writing in the free, untrammelled world of his spacious imagination. His genius overflows this play, and the rich excess of it is seen in passages of exquisite poetry,—such as the beautiful colloquy of *Titania* and *Oberon*, in the Second Act,—against which is set the triumph of humor, the Interlude of “Pyramus and Thisbe,”—which is the precursor of all the burlesques in our language, and which, for freshness, pungency of apposite satire, and general applicability to the foible of self-love in human nature and to ignorance and folly in human affairs, might have been written yesterday. There is a slight tinge of monotony in the Third Act, which relates to the lovers in the wood, and there is, throughout the text, an excess of rhymed passages; but the beauties overwhelm the trifling defects,—beauties such as the famous passage on “the course of true love”; the regal—and highly imaginative—picture of Queen Elizabeth as “a fair vestal thronèd by the West”; the fine description of a tempestuous summer; the vision of *Titania* asleep upon the bank of wild thyme, oxlips, and violets; the eloquent contrasts of

lover, madman, and poet, each subdued and impelled by that "strong imagination" which "bodies forth the forms of things unknown"; and the glowing, spirited lines on the hounds of Sparta,—“with ears that sweep away the morning dew.”

The earliest known mention of this play is the allusion to it by Meres, in "Palladis Tamia" (1598). It must have been known before that date, although not published till 1600. A reference to the subject of it has been observed in its author's earlier play of "The Comedy of Errors" (Act II., sc. 2, lines 190-204), and this has been thought to indicate that he had already considered and perhaps conceived it. The names of some of the characters, together with a few incidents, he is thought to have derived from Plutarch, Ovid, and, perhaps, Chaucer,—an author with whom he shows himself to have been acquainted. The story of *Pyramus* and *Thisbe* occurs in Ovid, and a translation of that poet, made by Arthur Golding (1536-1605), was current in Shakespeare's day. His characters are his own, and although, as Dr. Johnson observes, "fairies were in his time fashionable, and Spenser's 'Faerie Queene' had made them great," Shakespeare was the first to interblend them with the proceedings of mortals in a drama. The text of the piece is considered to be exceptionally free from error. Two editions of



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the play, in quarto, appeared in 1600,—one published by Thomas Fisher, bookseller; the other by James Roberts, printer. The Fisher quarto had been entered at Stationers' Hall, October 8, that year. The two editions do not largely differ, and Shakespeare editors have made a judicious use of both in their choice of the text. The play was not again printed until 1623, when it appeared in the First Folio. Each of the quartos consists of 32 leaves. Neither of them distinguishes the acts or scenes. In the First Folio the play occupies 18 pages, from p. 145 to p. 162 inclusive, in the section devoted to Comedies,—the acts, but not the scenes, being distinguished. The editors of that folio, Heminge and Condell, followed the text of the Roberts quarto. The name of one of the actors who appeared in this play in its earliest days is accidentally preserved in a stage-direction, printed in the First Folio, Act V., sc. 1: "Tawyer, with a trumpet." Mention of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," as impliedly a play generally known, was made by Taylor, the water poet, in 1622.

### THE CHARACTERS.

In the substantial ingredients and in the felicitous delineation of contrasted character this comedy is

exceptionally pleasing. *Theseus*, the natural gentleman, the essential prince; *Hippolita*, the stately yet tenderly gracious and sweetly ardent woman; *Helena*, noble and gentle, though a little deflected from probity ("I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight") by her amorous infatuation; *Hermia*, innately amiable, while froward and even violent because of her impetuous, clinging ardor; *Demetrius* and *Lysander*, each selfish and passionate in his love, but both manly, sincere, and straightforward, abounding in youth, force, and the desire of happiness more than in reason; *Bottom*, the paragon of unconscious egotism, the quintessence of ludicrous self-conceit,—those characters constitute a remarkably interesting and significant group. The self-centred, broad mind, magnanimous spirit, the calm adequacy, and the fine, high manner of *Theseus* make that character signally illustrative of the potent attribute, so seldom gained but of such prodigious value in the conduct of life, the virtue of self-possession. I have sometimes thought that in a few of his dramatic persons,—notably *Ulysses*, in "Troilus and Cressida"; the *Duke*, in "Measure for Measure," and *Prospero*, in "The Tempest,"—the authentic voice is heard of Shakespeare himself, and perhaps it is also audible in *Theseus*. "The best in this kind are but shadows," says that wise observer of life, when speaking of the

actors who copy it, "and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them." There is no higher strain of prince-like, considerate grace, in even the perfect courtesy of *Hamlet*, than is visible in the preference of *Theseus* for the play of the hard-handed men of Athens:

"Never anything can be amiss  
When simpleness and duty tender it. . . .  
And what poor duty cannot do  
Noble respect takes it in might, not merit."

#### THE RIGHT METHOD IN ACTING.

There is a peculiar canon of criticism, ratified by shining names, which would exclude from the Stage some of the highest and finest of dramatic creations. Hazlitt formulated it, in saying that "Poetry and the Stage do not agree well together. . . . The ideal can have *no place* upon the stage, which is a picture without perspective"; and, with special reference to "A Midsummer Night's Dream," he declared that the attempt to reconcile those alleged incompatibles "fails not only of effect but of decorum." There is some truth in the doctrine of the eminent critic, but that it is wholly true I cannot believe. There are, no doubt, difficulties in the way of a suitable representation of the



comedy, but, airy and fanciful as it is,—a fabric of the imagination, shaped in the realm of the ideal,—it possesses dramatic quality and interest, is susceptible of theatrical exposition, and ought not to be excluded from the Theatre. The obstacles in the way of its fitting performance can be, and more than once have been, measurably, or entirely, surmounted. The comedy seems to have been written in a free, careless, wandering spirit, as of a fantastic dream. It possesses due coherence of plot and it moves toward a definite result,—the happy union of lovers and a climax of general joy; but its movement proceeds through a facile, amusing tangle of whimsical incidents and capricious circumstances, “such stuff as dreams are made on.” It evidently was conceived and written in a vagrant, fortuitous mood, and a sympathetic comprehension of that mood should duly affect the acting of it. Players who can maintain themselves in an eager, confiding, joyous compliance with the wayward impulse of whimsical poetic fancy are likely to succeed as thoroughly in this gossamer play as they do in plays that move more on the ground than in the air. It is good, sometimes, to yield to our illusions. Shakespeare obviously did, and this comedy, in particular, is replete with intimation of his exuberant delight in the freedom he thus attained:

"The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,  
 Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,  
 And, as imagination bodies forth  
 The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
 Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing  
 A local habitation and a name."

Even *Bottom*, that consummate type of egregious conceit and unconscious humor, is at his height of significance in his moment of supreme illusion, and thus, involuntarily, he expounds the motive of the subject:

"I have had a dream,—past the wit of man to say what dream it was:—Man is but an ass if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had—but man is but a patched fool if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was."

#### EARLY REPRESENTATIONS.—BRITISH STAGE.

Nothing is known of the acting of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" when it was performed by the Lord Chamberlain's company, of which the author was a member, at the Globe Theatre,—where it was first exhibited, apparently in 1592. Names of the

principal actors in the company at that time are known, and conjecture, musing on such information as exists about those actors, can fabricate a cast—to please itself. The history of the play on the early British Stage is, literally, a blank. An alteration of it, entitled “The Fairy Queen,” was presented at Drury Lane, in 1692. The name of its maker is unknown. *Hippolita* was omitted. Much use was made of dancing and of scenery. Six players dressed as monkeys were introduced, in a dance. One scene showed a Chinese Garden. One auxiliary consisted of peacocks, with spreading tails. The original was considerably mutilated, alike in form and text. The play, in fact, was partly an opera and partly a spectacle. The music, written by the accomplished Henry Purcell (1658-1695), was appropriate and agreeable. A statement by Downes, in his “*Roscius Anglicanus*,” quaintly epitomizes the history of this composition:

“‘The Fairy Queen,’ made into an Opera, from a comedy by Mr. Shakespeare: This, in ornament, was superior to the other two [Dryden’s “King Arthur” and Betterton’s “The Prophetess”] especially in cloathes for all the Singers and Dancers: Scenes, Machines, and Decorations; all most profusely set off and excellently performed: chiefly the instrumental and vocal part, compos’d by the said Mr. Purcell, and dances by Mr. Priest. The Court and Town were wonderfully satisfy’d with it, but the expences in setting it out being so great, the Company got very little by it.”



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"One little fragment of the contemporary stage humor displayed in the representation of this play [in early days] has been recorded. When *Thisbe* killed herself she fell on the scabbard, not on the trusty sword, the interlude, doubtless, having been acted in the spirit of extreme farce which was naturally evolved from the stupidity and nervousness of the clowns" (Halliwell-Phillipps).

Mention is made in old theatrical records of a farce called "The Merry Conceited Humours of Bottom the Weaver," made by Robert Cox, from an episode in Shakespeare's play, and acted by its author and his associates. Cox was a clever comedian, popular in the reign of King Charles the First, at which time an actor was free to pursue his vocation. Later, in Puritan times, when the theatres had been closed, Cox gained a scanty subsistence by stealthily presenting, at fairs, and wherever else he could, the farces which he made out of comic scenes from old plays. A collection of his medleys,—of which "The Humors of Bottom" was one,—edited by Francis Kirkman, was published (1662) under the title of "The Wits, or Sport upon Sport."

A composition, called a "comic masque," derived from Shakespeare's play was presented at Lincoln's Inn Fields, October 29, 1716, under the name of "Pyramus and Thisbe." This was the work of Richard Leveridge (1670-1758), a person described

by Sir John Hawkins ("History of Music") as "a man of rather coarse manners, able to drink a great deal, and by some thought a good companion." Leveridge possessed a fine bass voice, which he effectively used, as a member of John Rich's company, at the Fields. In the performance of his Masque he officiated as *Pyramus* and spoke a Prologue. Among his associates were James Spiller as *Bottom*, William Bullock as *Quince*, and George Pack as *Thisbe* (*Flute*). An operatic trifle bearing the same name, by a composer named Lampe, was performed December 24, 1745, at Covent Garden, with John Beard as *Pyramus* and Mrs. Lampe as *Thisbe*. Charles Dibdin, a musician and a critic well qualified to judge, said that Beard was "the best English singer" of the time, and the exigent Boaden declared him to be "unrivalled" in singing. Mention occurs of a Pantomime on the Shakespeare episode of "Pyramus and Thisbe," by Walley Chamberlain Oulton, acted at Birmingham, England, and published in 1798.

An alteration of the comedy made by Garrick (in 1754, according to Davies) was produced at Drury Lane, February 3, 1755, as an opera. Davies mentions it, in a note to Downes's "Roscius Anglicanus." George Kearsley enters it in the list of Garrick's dramatic works, prefixed to his collection of them (1785). Genest refers to it, somewhat doubtfully,

saying: "It is generally attributed to Garrick." The original was condensed into three acts. *Bottom* and his comrades were omitted. The cast (1755) included John Beard as *Theseus*, Signor Curioni as *Lysander*, ——— Atkins as *Demetrius*, ——— Channys as *Egeus*, Signora Passerini as *Hermia*, Mrs. ——— Vernon as *Helena*, Mrs. Jefferson as *Hippolita*, and Elizabeth Young as *Titania*. This opera was several times repeated, and then laid aside, but eight years later Garrick made another experiment with Shakespeare's comedy, producing it, at Drury Lane, November 23, 1763, still in operatic form, but this time in five acts. The dialogue was curtailed. Some of the burlesque was retained. Thirty-three songs were introduced: in his former version there had been twenty-seven. *Helena* was acted by Mrs. Vincent, *Hermia* by Miss Young, and *Hippolita* by Mrs. Hopkins. Richard Yates played *Bottom*, giving a good performance. The fairies were represented by children. Colman, who, in the absence of Garrick, had superintended the rehearsals, says that he had foretold the failure of the revival, and that, after the first night, the play was, by his advice, reduced from five to two acts, and performed under the title of "A Fairy Tale." In this, its second form, it was acted several times and it seems to have met with a little favor. Garrick's version was published, in



quarto, in 1763, by Jacob Tonson. The "Fairy Tale" version appeared in 1764.

#### LATER REVIVALS IN LONDON.

More than fifty years passed before another production of this play, in any form, was attempted. On January 17, 1816, an alteration, the work of Frederick Reynolds, was produced at Covent Garden. This also was somewhat in operatic form: sixteen songs were interpolated. The original text was condensed and garbled. *Bottom's* part was augmented. The auxiliary of dancing was freely used. The farcical tragedy was rehearsed in a woodland scene, and the play was ended by a pageant illustrative of the triumphs of *Theseus*. The cast was uncommonly strong:—*Theseus*, William Augustus Conway; *Philstrate*, Stephen Hamerton; *Bottom*, John Liston; *Quince*, John Emery; *Snug*, ——— Tokely; *Flute*, Samuel Simmons; *Snout*, William Blanchard, 1st.; *Starveling*, ——— Menage; *Hippolita*, Miss H. Logan; *Hermia*, Katherine Stephens; *Helena*, Maria Foote; *Oberon*, John Duruset; *Puck*, Sally Booth; *Titania*, Mrs. Harriet Faucit (mother of the famous Helena Faucit).

## THE MATHEWS AND VESTRIS PRODUCTION.

In the season of 1840-'41, Charles Mathews and his wife, Eliza Vestris, being then managers of Covent Garden, a production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" was effected, with splendid scenery, a fine cast, and Mendelssohn's delicious music,—used for the first time. Planché supervised the presentment, which was correct, elegant, and refined. At his suggestion a lovely scene was painted by Grieve, with which to close the performance,—a picture conformable to the spirit of the verse which is spoken by *Oberon*:

"Through the house give glimmering light  
 By the dead and drowsy fire,  
 Every elf and fairy sprite  
 Hop as light as bird from brier;  
 And this ditty, after me,  
 Sing and dance it trippingly."

Morley remarks that "the play furnished Mme. Vestris with a spectacle which altogether wanted the Shakespearean spirit." The exact meaning that critics in general attach to the word "Shakespearean" has never been specified. The Mathews-Vestris production was, by many contemporary recorders, pronounced excellent. It certainly was successful. The

play was acted fifty-nine times in the first season and eleven times in the second.

PHELPS'S REVIVAL.

The next presentment was effected by Samuel Phelps, at Sadler's Wells, October 8, 1853. The play was treated in the right spirit, and specific contemporary records of the production testify to its merit. The scenery, while not costly, was tasteful and appropriate. A curtain of green gauze, so hung as not to be easily perceived, was placed between the actors and the audience, during the greater part of the representation. This caused diffusion of a soft, green haze over the scenes and persons, making them mist-like. The dresses were devised with a view to the same effect of intangibility. Phelps, impersonating *Bottom*, elicited the full meaning of the part, its unconscious comicality, and its grandiose egotism. "Phelps has not dabbed the sweet bully with the old player's old hare's foot, but has taken the finest pencil. *Bottom*, as played by Phelps, is an ass with a vehemence, a will, a vigor in his conceit, but still an ass" (Douglas Jerrold). The finest part of Phelps's embodiment, the part in which the actor specially indicated subtle perception of the author's design, was that which follows *Bottom's* emergence



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from what he calls his Dream. There was a peculiar, effective change of manner, from effusive self-importance, before the "translation," to a subdued yet comical preoccupation, after it,—as of a man perplexed by some incomprehensible, inadmissible, startling idea: this *Bottom* had vaguely dreamed of being an ass, and he was comically aghast at his dream. The contentions of the lovers, when in their enchanted state, in the forest, seem to have been,—as they usually are, whenever this play is acted,—harsh and violent. Henry Marston as *Theseus* was the most important feature of the cast.

### CHARLES KEAN'S REVIVAL.

An ornate and splendid scenic investment was given to the comedy by Charles Kean, who produced it, at the Princess' Theatre, London, October 25, 1856, treating it as a spectacle and winning bounteous public acceptance of it in that form. The play was repeated 150 times in that season and the next. (Kean's management of the Princess' extended from August, 1850, to August, 1859.) In one scene *Oberon* was so presented as to seem to be a magician, waving his wand, as though exhibiting a show. This was business, incidental to "a dream-like moving of

the wood." The quarrel between *Helena* and *Hermia* was omitted. The closing scene implicated a resplendent ballet of fairies dancing round a Maypole which shot out of an aloe and rained garlands of flowers. The cast included John Ryder as *Theseus*, Miss Murray as *Hippolita*, Caroline Heath as *Helena*, Ellen Bufton as *Hermia*, Fanny Ternan as *Oberon*, Carlotta Leclercq as *Titania*, Ellen Terry as *Puck*, John Pritt Harley as *Bottom*, Frank Matthews as *Quince*, F. Cooke as *Snug*, Drinkwater Meadows as *Snout*, and Edward Saker as *Flute*; while among the fairies were Kate Terry, Laura Honey, and Rose Leclercq. John William Cole, in his "Life of Charles Kean" (1859), declares, with reference to Kean's investiture of this play, that "an endless succession of skilfully blended pictorial, mechanical, and musical effects overpowered the faculties of the spectators with the influence of an enchanting vision." Henry Morley, who was one of the spectators, and whose faculties do not seem to have been quite overpowered, wrote that the words of the play were spoken agreeably, and that much of its delicate pleasantry was effectively imparted; but intimated that poetry was subordinated to decoration and that the play was overlaid with scenery, beautiful in itself, but detractive from the desirable effect of the subject and the acting. Kean's example, in this respect, has, however, been followed,

and by the public has generally been approved, in later revivals of the comedy.

A German writer, Theodor Fontane, 1860, who saw Kean's presentment of the comedy, was specially impressed by the manner of *Puck's* appearance, seated on a huge toadstool, which, apparently, "grows out of the ground." This observer commends the costume of *Puck* as "well chosen," and describes it as having been a "dark brownish-red garment, trimmed with blood-red moss and lichens" and comprising also "a similar crown" on the "blond, somewhat dishevelled hair" of the little Ellen Terry, by whom the part was played. He remarks also that her arms were "thin and bare and as long as though she belonged to the Clan Campbell, whose arms reach to their knees," and he adds that "this ten-year-old Miss Ellen Terry was a downright intolerable, precocious, genuine English, ill-bred, unchildlike child." "Nevertheless," he continues, "the impression of her mere appearance is so deep that I cannot now imagine a grown-up *Puck*, with a full neck and round arms." Fontane particularly noted the mechanical devices employed in the presentation, especially when *Puck* was caused to fly "through the air like an arrow." Miss Terry herself records that this flight was accomplished by the use of a dummy. "One night," she says, "the dummy, while in full flying action, fell on the stage, where-



upon, in great concern for its safety, I ran on, picked it up in my arms, and ran off with it, amid roars of laughter. . . . While I was playing *Puck* I grew very gawky, not to say ugly. My hair had been cut short and my red cheeks stuck out too much. I was a sight!" The actress, nevertheless, is of opinion that she played the part well. In later years, notably in Daly's 1888 revival of the comedy, the flight of *Puck* through the air was accomplished by the performer of that part, seated upon a seeming wreath of flowering vine.

#### VARIOUS REPRESENTATIONS.

On the London Stage, since 1856, at least nine presentments of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" have been made, and many representations of it have occurred in the British provincial cities,—several of them at Stratford-upon-Avon. On September 17, 1870, a creditable production of it was made at the Queen's Theatre, London, with Phelps as *Bottom*, but this was not comparable with the previous presentments made by that actor at Sadler's Wells. On February 15, 1875, only three years before his death, Phelps again acted in the comedy, appearing at the Gaiety Theatre, on which occasion his devoted votary and pupil Johnston Forbes-Robertson acted *Lysander*.

At Sadler's Wells, June 28, 1800, the play was presented with Edmund Lyons as *Bottom*, and, on December 19, 1889, F. R. Benson, acting *Lysander*, brought it out at the Globe Theatre,—Kate Rorke being *Helena* and George W. Weir *Bottom*. Augustin Daly's production of it was shown at Daly's Theatre, London, July 9, 1895. Daly's presentment was admirable, but, though popular (it was repeated many times, to large audiences), it was harshly and unjustly censured in some of the local newspapers. One writer insolently condemned Daly and his managerial enterprises in these words:

“ . . . *It is not too much to say that Mr. Daly, in his treatment of 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona' and 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' has not only gone beyond the worst of Garrick's Shakespearean mistakes, but has revealed to us depths of silliness and egregious bad taste of which even the Davenants, the Tates, and the Colley Cibbers, in their most ineffectual moments, never dreamed.*”

The intelligent and judicious reader has only to contrast Daly's version of “A Midsummer Night's Dream” with Garrick's two-act version of “The Winter's Tale” and his mangled “Hamlet,” Davenant's distortion of “Macbeth,” Tate's desecration of “King Lear,” and Cibber's perversion of “King Richard III.” to decide as to the justice of such censure.

Daly made a good, practical, working stage ver-

sion of the comedy and placed it on the stage in a beautiful setting. His version is printed, and is accessible to the student. It is in five acts and seven scenes, requiring five settings, and it retains 1,515 lines of the original, which is in nine scenes and contains 2,172 lines. Daly's treatment of this play is fully considered in the section of this chapter devoted to the AMERICAN STAGE. His presentment at Daly's Theatre, London, exercised a strong influence on those subsequently made in that city. The strictures upon it which were made by censorious writers might much more suitably have been reserved for the subsequent revivals effected by Beerbohm-Tree, Arthur Bouchier, and Oscar Ashe; but Daly was an American, who had dared to enter the "closed borough" of London and compete with English theatrical managers, regardless of English prejudice. The people supported him: in some instances the press treated him with tiresome condescension, sometimes with open injustice. British journalism is frequently marked by an insufferable assumption of superiority for which nothing in its thought or style provides any warrant. No writer, American or English, whose writings are known to me, has shown a more sympathetic understanding or expressed a heartier appreciation of the great and splendid qualities of the English people than I have; and few American



writers have been favored with, comparatively, so little of the top-loftical patronage to which I allude,—though several of my works have been published in England before they were brought out in my own country: perhaps, then, it is possible for me to mention and condemn, as it bears upon the stage story of Shakespeare, an element in British journalism (often noted and condemned by such great English writers as Dickens, Reade, and Collins) without being misunderstood.

Beerbohm-Tree presented “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” at Her Majesty’s Theatre, January 10, 1900, in costly, handsome style, himself acting *Bottom*. Lewis Waller was *Lysander*, Sarah Brooke *Hermia*, and Dorothea Baird *Helena*. Waller was “a poetical *Lysander*,” Miss Brooke a pleasing *Hermia*, while Miss Baird was “so fascinating as *Helena* it was difficult to understand *Demetrius*’ harshness.”\* The emphasis, as in practically all of Tree’s Shakespearean productions, was laid on scenic embellishment,—which, in this instance, was deemed beautiful and in excellent taste. The finest setting was that of a Wood near Athens,—carpeted with thyme and wild flowers, showing brakes and thickets full of blossom, and a background, visible through large, tall trees, of a pearly dawn or the deep hues of the night sky. The costumes, designed by Percy Anderson, were rich and

handsome: Mendelssohn's music was effectively used: the fairies, "played by groups of graceful children," were dainty. ~~Miss Louie Freear was "a funny little Cockney Puck, with a true Puckish laugh" and a "freakishness of speech."~~ In the last act, ~~after the mortals had left the scene and the fairies had taken possession,~~ there was a fairy dance, during which the pillars of the hall became luminous,—“every pillar a shaft of light,”—and the garlands hung upon them sparkled with points of light. The fairies were finally dismissed by their *King* and *Queen*, the lights sank to a glow, the glow faded to darkness, under cover of which the curtain descended, and then the house lights were turned up as though to awaken the audience from a dream. The revival, as a whole, was said to present “a performance of great beauty, a more perfect setting than the play can ever have had, and plenty of fun in the comic scenes.”

Tree made *Bottom* unnecessarily unpleasant in appearance—he had the bibulous visage of a confirmed toper and a voice thickened with indulgence in liquor. But he presented “a capital study of the conceited peasant, with his fancy for playing every part in turn and his confidence in his power to play all equally well. Especially good was his awakening in the wood, after the ass's head had been taken off. His cloudy astonishment and his dazed bewilderment

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as to the events of the night were very cleverly acted."

On February 22, 1900, F. R. Benson revived the comedy at the Lyceum Theatre, acting *Lysander*, with Miss Lily Brayton as *Helena*, Frank Rodney as *Oberon*, Miss Kitty Loftus as *Puck*, and Lyall Swete (taking the place of George W. Weir, who was unable to act) as *Bottom*. Benson's presentment, while making no pretence of competition, in scenic opulence, with that of Tree, concurrent at Her Majesty's, was handsome and adequate, providing a simple, charming background for the action. The performance, as a whole, was commended for poetic spirit and dream-like, fantastic quality, the balance between the fairy parts and the clowns being well kept, the two pairs of lovers serving as the connecting link. Miss Brayton, as *Helena*, was charming by reason of her winning manner and pleasing utterance. Miss Loftus was sprightly and elf-like as *Puck*. Mr. Swete "got a good deal of fun out of *Bottom*." Mendelssohn's music for the play was used, with his "Spring" and his "Spinning" songs, from the "Songs Without Words," and also Horn's arrangement of "I know a bank," Cooke's setting of "Over hill, over dale," and a number by Herr Michael Baling. Superfluous introduction of musical numbers by Deutsche Herren into plays of Shakespeare will,



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probably, not be frequent in the London theatres, hereafter.

Oscar Ashe presented the comedy at the Adelphi Theatre, November 25, 1905, acting *Bottom*, with Lily Brayton as *Helena*, Frances Dillon as *Hermia*, and Lyall Swete as *Quince*. "Ashe was triumphantly loutish and magnificently dense as *Bottom*,—an ass 'in the grand style.'" Swete, as *Quince*, seems to have been the feature of that revival. His appearance was comic: he was "naturally pompous in manner, plaintive, to a piccolo squeak, in intonation," "a man of one, single, absorbing purpose,—the purpose of successfully engineering the 'command' performance of 'Pyramus and Thisbe.'" The production was "a delightful spectacle." "The fairy element was not happily cast." Walter Hampden played *Oberon*, Roxey Barton *Titania*, Alfred Brydore *Theseus*, H. R. Wignell *Lysander*, and R. Ian Penny *Demetrius*. Miss Beatrice Ferrar was "a fairly impish *Puck*."

The play was presented, April 17, 1911, at His Majesty's, Arthur Bouchier being *Bottom*. There was an excess of scenic display. At the end of the First Act a meaningless shower of golden leaves fell on the scene. The magic flower, which maidens "call love-in-idleness," was provided with an internal electric light. The luminous pillars used in Tree's first revival appeared again, only they were, apparently,

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more luminous. The garlands were, practically, strings of electric lights. The fairy scenes and the stage-setting were excellent. "Fairies—never too clearly seen—in a fairy-like forest, elusive, misty lights and shadows in the moonlight—a noble *Oberon*, a very sweet *Titania*, a droll *Puck*,—perhaps these are what give the production its chief attraction. There is more of forest and less of stage about it than we could have expected. It was real enough, even for the real rabbits, who made themselves quite at home." During the love scenes in the forest "little fairies peeping from behind trees: little fairies crawling in on all fours to listen, or flying up and down and in and out on the sky behind." *Puck* "fairly rolled on the ground with laughter at the mortal fools." Bouchier as *Bottom* "combined ingenuity with robustness [whatever that combination may mean!] till his audience fairly shook with laughter." Mendelssohn's music for the play was again used, with part of his Italian and part of his Scotch symphonies, and selections from his "Songs Without Words." These were the chief features of the cast: *Oberon*, Evelyn D'Alroy; *Titania*, Margery Maude; *Puck*, Master Burford Hampden; *Hermia*, Laura Cowie; *Lysander*, Basil Gill; *Demetrius*, E. Ian Swinely.

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AMERICAN STAGE.—THE OLD PARK REVIVALS.

The first performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" that was given in America occurred on November 9, 1826, at the old Park Theatre, New York. The play was acted for the benefit of a much admired actress of that period, Mrs. Hilson.

<i>Bottom</i> .....	Thomas Hilson
<i>Snout</i> .....	Henry Placide
<i>Oberon</i> .....	Peter Richings
<i>Puck</i> .....	Mrs. Hilson
<i>Titania</i> .....	Mrs. Sharpe
<i>Hippolita</i> .....	Mrs. Stickney
<i>Hermia</i> .....	Mrs. Hackett

Mrs. Hilson (Ellen Augusta Johnson, 1800-1837) is commemorated as an actress of rare ability and one of the most beautiful women who have ever adorned the stage. The daughter of Mrs. John Johnson (1770-1830), of the old John Street Theatre,—also a beauty and a fine tragic actress, called in her day "the Siddons of America,"—she had been carefully educated, she spoke several modern languages, and she was in other ways accomplished. "Her features were handsome and expressive, her eyes of the softest blue, her complexion of the most delicate fairness, and her hair, a rich auburn in color and profuse in quantity, usually floated in many curls over her snowy and well-turned shoulders" (Ireland). Mrs. Sharpe (a sister of Mrs. Hackett) was an actress of surprisingly versatile talent. Placide was a comedian



of the highest order. Richings, whom I remember only as a correct "old man," was, at that time, distinguished for his proficiency in light comedy and in vocalism. Mrs. Hackett (Catherine Leesugg), first wife of James Henry Hackett, was bewitching as a woman and charming as a singer. Thomas Hilson (1784?-1834) was one of the best and most renowned comedians of that period of the American Stage.

Another revival of the comedy occurred at the old Park Theatre on August 30, 1841, in which special stress was laid on the presentment of the Fairy Scenes. Charlotte Cushman, then twenty-five years of age, was the *Oberon*, Mary Taylor the *Titania*, and Mrs. Knight (Eliza Povey) the *Puck*. Mrs. Groves was *Hippolita*. Others in the cast were William Wheatley as *Lysander*, C. W. Clarke as *Demetrius*, W. H. Williams as *Bottom*, and Charles Fisher as *Quince*. The production was carefully made and it was highly creditable, but it did not prosper and it was soon withdrawn. W. H. Williams (1797-1846) was an English actor, at one time a popular low-comedian in Phelps's company, at Sadler's Wells,—playing *Bardolph*, the *First Grave-Digger*, Cockney parts, and Yorkshire bumpkins. He does not seem to have made a special hit as *Bottom*. Oxberry, who was familiar with his acting, commends his talent and comments on his "assurance."



*From a Steel Engraving*

*Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

**WILLIAM E. BURTON AS *BOTTOM***

*"The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was!"*

**ACT IV., SC. 1**





# A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM 263

AT BURTON'S,—THE BROADWAY,—LAURA KEENE'S.

Ambitious performances of this play were given in New York, in 1854, at Burton's Theatre, February 3, and at the first Broadway Theatre, February 6. Those were rival houses, and each manager (Burton at the former, E. A. Marshall at the latter) put forth his utmost strength to excel. These were the casts:

	At Burton's, February 3.	At The Broadway, February 6.
<i>Theseus,</i>	Charles Fisher	Frederick B. Conway
<i>Lysander,</i>	George Jordan	Matthew Lanergan
<i>Demetrius,</i>	William Henry Norton	Joseph Grosvenor
<i>Egeus,</i>	John Moore	John Matthews
<i>Bottom,</i>	William Evans Burton	William P. Davidge
<i>Quince,</i>	Thomas Johnston	Henry J. Howard
<i>Flute,</i>	George Barrett	David Whiting
<i>Snug,</i>	—— Russell	—— Fisk
<i>Snout,</i>	George H. Andrews	John Henry
<i>Starveling,</i>	W. H. Paul	William F. Cutter
<i>Puck,</i>	Charles T. Parsloe, Jr.	Viola Crocker
<i>Oberon,</i>	—— Raymond	Mme. Ponisi
<i>Titania,</i>	Mrs. Burton	Mrs. Abbott
<i>Hippolita,</i>	Mrs. J. Cooke	Mrs. Warren
<i>Hermia,</i>	Mrs. Hough	Mrs. Nagle
<i>Helena,</i>	Mrs. Buckland	Adelaide Gougenheim

William Evans Burton (1804-1860), whose humor was delicious and whose art was superb, gave a carefully studied and spontaneously comic performance of *Bottom*. "As Burton renders the character, its traits are brought out with a delicate and masterly hand" (R. G. White). "How striking Burton's acting was

in the scenes where the artisans meet for the distribution of parts in the play, and how finely exemplified was the potential vanity of *Bottom!*" (William Linn Keese). Burton's production held the stage till March 6; Marshall's till March 11. The scenery in both productions was opulent, but Marshall's pageant was considered the more magnificent. Mendelssohn's music was used in both. The actors in the two casts were about equally matched, Burton's cast, however, being a little the stronger.

Laura Keene presented the comedy at her theatre, April 18, 1859, from the acting version made by Charles Kean, and under the advisement of the "Shakespeare scholar" Richard Grant White, with rich scenery and a judicious cast, of which these were the principal features: Charles Walter Couldock as *Theseus*, Edward A. Sothern as *Lysander*, Milnes Levick as *Demetrius*, Ada Clifton as *Helena*, Sara Stevens as *Hermia*, Mary Wells as *Hippolita*, William Rufus Blake as *Bottom*, Edwin Varrey as *Quince*, Charles Peters as *Flute*, John Henry as *Snout*, Marion Macarthy as *Oberon*, Eliza Couldock as *Titania*, and Laura Keene as *Puck*. Forty performances were given. Blake proved, to some judges, a disappointment, as *Bottom*: his performance (so wrote a leading critic of that period, Edward G. P. Wilkins) was "not funny, not even grotesque, but

vulgar and unpleasant." Charles Peters, as *Flute*, was particularly humorous in his assumption of *Thisbe*. Laura Keene was elfish, mischievous, and charming as *Puck*. The revival merited greater favor than it received.

#### THE OLYMPIC PRODUCTION.

Laura Keene's Theatre passed from her management in 1863, when Mrs. John Wood was installed as manager, under the silent supervision of John Duff. The house was then called the Olympic Theatre. Mrs. Wood did not long remain in office, but Duff's control of the theatre extended over a period of years, and at the Olympic, on October 28, 1867, his son-in-law, James E. Hayes, being then manager, a revival of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" was effected, with scenery of singular beauty and an efficient cast. Charles Kean's acting version was again used. Hayes, who painted the scenery, was almost unrivalled, in his day, as a scenic artist, and in this production he reinforced his own excellent paintings with Telbin's Panorama of Grecian Scenery, used to illustrate the passage of the reconciled and happy lovers from the woodland, where they had been bewitched, to Athens and a palatial jubilee. This panorama had been brought by Joseph Jefferson, returning from London after his first auspicious suc-



cess there, as *Rip Van Winkle*, and he had suggested the revival of the comedy, and also had assisted in the rehearsals. Telbin's painting exhibited a wild, delightful commingling of meadow and woodland, hill and valley, rock and stream, rural road and classic temple, all suffused with the sentiment that appertains to landscape, the atmosphere of poetic significance with which Nature so often and so generously invests her creations. This was supplemented by a scene of dazzling brilliancy, devised by Hayes, with which to close the performance. At first a spacious vineyard was shown, in which fauns and satyrs were sporting among the vines. This slowly vanished, revealing a fairy bower, luxuriant with foliage and flowers. Then, in a luminous vista, *Oberon* and *Titania*, attended by their train, floated upward, as if on silvery clouds. *Puck* figured in the group. Forms of winged fairies ascended and descended. The whole stage was thronged with shining shapes and irradiated with colored lights. One of the incidental scenes was a clever imitation of Landseer's well-known picture of the illusion of *Titania*, showing *Bottom*, "translated" with the ass's head, and crowned with garlands. The cast, on that occasion, while respectable, was strong in only a few features. It comprised Henry Wall as *Theseus*, Mrs. C. Edmonds as *Hippolita*, Joseph Franks as *Lysander*, J. J. Wallace as *Demetrius*,

Thomas J. Hind as *Egeus*, Mrs. Wallace as *Hermia*, Louisa Hawthorne as *Helena*, E. T. Sinclair as *Philstrate*, George L. Fox as *Bottom*, William P. Davidge as *Quince*, Owen Marlowe as *Flute*, Charles Kemble Fox as *Snug*, Mark Quinlan as *Snout*, Fanny Stockton as *Oberon*, Cornelia Jefferson as *Titania*, Clara Fisher (the younger, a remarkable vocalist) as *Peasblossom*, and W. Young as *Puck*.

George L—— Fox (1825-1877) is remembered chiefly as a consummate performer in pantomime. He was expert and irresistibly funny as the *Clown*,—expressive in every posture, gesture, and action, and dryly humorous; but he had evinced exceptional talent as a general actor before he identified himself with clowning. His personation of *Bottom* was a complete embodiment of egregious egotism, drolly consequential and stolidly conceited. He wore the ass's head, but he did not know that he was wearing it; and when, afterward, the vague sense of it came upon him for an instant, he put it by as something inconceivable. His "Not a word of me!"—spoken to his comrades, the other hard-handed men of Athens, after his return to them out of the enchanted "palace wood,"—was his finest single point, expressing to the utmost the colossal self-opinion and the mental confusion of this prodigy of bland and sapient conceit. Davidge typified the dulness, sincerity, and

amiability of *Quince* without either effort or extravagance. Owen Marlowe, as *Flute*, when representing *Thisbe*, cleverly, though inappropriately, burlesqued the manner of the famous French actress Rachel. Marlowe was an actor of exceptional talent, and whatever he did he did well: he should have exercised better judgment than to do this. In the incidental singing of Mendelssohn's music Fanny Stockton and Clara Fisher delightfully exerted the charm of sympathetic vocalism. The comedy was performed for 100 nights, the longest run ever obtained for it in America.

#### DALY'S REVIVALS.

Daly made two productions of "A Midsummer Night's Dream,"—the first at the Grand Opera House, August 19, 1873, and the second at Daly's Theatre, January 31, 1888. The latter production he several times subsequently revived,—on March 5, 1890, in New York; on July 9, 1895, at Daly's Theatre, London; in various cities of America (Chicago, Baltimore, Boston, Brooklyn, etc.), in the autumn of 1895. In the early part of 1896 a tour of about ten weeks, through the smaller cities of the country, was made by a special company, organized by Daly in some form of association with Arthur Rehan, presenting this comedy. The following are the principal Daly casts:



Grand O. H., August 19, 1873.	Daly's Theatre, N. Y., January 31, 1888.	Daly's Theatre, N. Y., March 5, 1890.	On Tour, 1895.
<i>Theseus</i> ..... <i>Egeus</i> ..... <i>Lysander</i> ..... <i>Demetrius</i> ..... <i>Philstrate</i> ..... <i>Quince</i> ..... <i>Snug</i> ..... <i>Bottom</i> ..... <i>Flute</i> ..... <i>Snout</i> ..... <i>Starveling</i> ..... <i>Hippolita</i> ..... <i>Helena</i> ..... <i>Hermia</i> ..... <i>Oberon</i> ..... <i>Titania</i> ..... <i>Puck</i> .....	M. A. Kennedy Cyril Searle D. H. Harkins James H. Taylor C. Manley Frank Hardenbergh Ch. K. Fox Geo. L. Fox Charles Leclercq John W. Jennings W. H. Hamilton Marguerite Chambers Nina Varian Adelaide Lennox Amie K. Bowler Fanny Hayward Fay Templeton	Joseph Holland Charles Fisher Otis Skinner John Drew Eugene Ormond Charles Leclercq Fred. Bond James Lewis William Gilbert John Wood Edward Wilks Phoebe Russell Ada Rehan Virginia Dreher Alice Hood Effie Shannon Bijou Fernandez	George Clarke Edwin Varrey John Craig Frank Worthing Hobart Bosworth Tyrone Power Herbert Gresham James Lewis Sidney Herbert Wm. Sampson Thomas Bridgeland Ida Sterling Ada Rehan Maxine Elliott Sybil Carlisle Percy Haswell Lillian Swain

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The dresses and scenic investient of the Grand Opera House production were handsome and appropriate. One of the scenes, a woodland, painted by G. Heister, was, in particular, an admirable work of art,—sensuous in feeling for landscape, rich and delicate in color, and fanciful in composition. Nina Varian acted *Helena* in an earnest spirit, tender and true, and Fay Templeton gave a sprightly performance of *Puck*.

On the occasion of his second revival of the comedy, 1888, at Daly's Theatre, Daly used his own acting version, producing it with a magnificent stage-setting: the company gave a capital performance. It was received with much favor and it was acted for more than fifty nights. Daly introduced much new and always effective stage business. The disposition of the groups at the beginning was impressive and imposing and so was the treatment of the quarrel between *Oberon* and *Titania*, with the disappearance of the Indian child. The moonlight effects, in the transition from Act Second to Act Third, and the gradual assembly of goblins and fairies in shadowy mists through which the fireflies glimmered, at the close of Act Third, were novel and beautiful. The Third Act was judiciously compressed, so that the spectator might not see too much of the perplexed and wrangling lovers. Some of that original text was

omitted. The music for the choruses was selected from various English composers,—that of Mendelssohn being prescribed for only the orchestra. Cuts and transpositions were made at the end of the Fourth Act, in order to close it with the voyage of the barge of *Theseus*, through a summer landscape, on the silver stream that rippled down to Athens.

Daly's definitive production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" was mounted and clothed in scenery and attire as rich and beautiful as any that have ever been displayed on the American Stage. Viewed as pageantry alone, that presentment was delightful; but it was not on pageantry alone that the reliance was placed. Much attention centred on the acting of *Bottom* by James Lewis. That actor was dry, piquant, and chirrupy in his humor, and he could not employ,—and therefore, wisely, did not try to employ,—the methods of such actors as Burton, De Bar, Owens, and Setchell, all of whom were humorists of the unctuous order, and therefore consonant with the part. Lewis, however, possessed an individual style of drollery, and he often succeeded where he had been expected to fail. He thoroughly comprehended the character of *Bottom*,—a healthful, vigorous, self-complacent ass, inordinately vain, temperamentally good-natured, and unconsciously amusing in his absurd demeanor, his assump-



tion of sapience, and his bland loquacity,—and in his free, flexible embodiment of it the fine comedian made a dexterous use of his airy, perky, brittle method and was continuously funny. The manner he imparted to *Bottom* was not that of slow sapience in asininity and ruminant gravity, but that of nimble, eager delight in all his faculties and deeds. When the ass's head is set on *Bottom's* shoulders he does not know it, and the supremely comic moment of his life is the one in which his mind recoils from its own dim, glimmering, confused perception that he *is* an ass,—a perception that cannot be endured but must be dismissed as the figment of a preposterous dream. Lewis made that moment delightfully comic. He was notably clean in person and raiment: his dress was suitably coarse, but it was not literally soiled. His make-up was characteristic of the man. He wore close-cropped red hair: his eyes were bright: his face was fresh and ruddy: he was the incarnation of joyful self-conceit. His ideal of *Bottom* was not wholly that which can be deduced from Shakespeare's text, but his embodiment of it gave great pleasure. He made a separate entrance, crying "Ready," and in aspect and manner he then struck the keynote of his impersonation, which was original, consistent, sustained, precise, and amusing. As an actor of burlesque Lewis was perfect: in the interlude of "Pyramus and Thisbe"



*From a Photograph by Sarony*

*Author's Collection*

**JAMES LEWIS AS BOTTOM**

*"Methought I was,—and methought I had,—but man  
is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what me-  
thought I had!"*

ACT IV., SC. 1





his absolute sincerity and intense earnestness were irresistibly humorous. With his public he was always, in the character of *Bottom*, a great favorite.

The male characters implicated in the love story of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" do not afford much scope for acting. The imperial figure of the play is *Theseus*,—stately, self-possessed, magnanimous, intellectual, born to command, and as gentle as he is wise. *Demetrius* and *Lysander*, equally ardent and fierce, and about equally selfish, are honest, manly youths, abounding in desire but not marked by strikingly distinctive attributes. *Lysander* is the more poetical of those lovers and he speaks the sweeter words. Their chief business, however, is to be sincere and ingenuous. The female characters are more dramatic. *Helena* is a noble, affectionate girl, but she is a little warped from womanlike reserve and dignity by the violence of her passion. *Hermia* is shrewish, notwithstanding her sweetness. The group of these four lovers, when the parts were acted by Ada Rehan, Virginia Dreher, John Drew, and Otis Skinner, made a romantic picture, much enjoyed and not to be forgotten, in which the strength, freshness, and grace of young manhood vied with the rosy bloom of ripe, sensuous, dazzling beauty,—the most brilliant figure being that of Miss Rehan, as *Helena*, regal and lovely in a Gre-

cian robe of delicate salmon pink. The part is exceptionally exacting, and only a charming personality can endear it to the auditor, because *Helena* is peculiarly the victim of an amatory infatuation which makes her once unfaithful to friendship and keeps her in a condition of painful self-conflict. She is impetuous, sincere, and by turns both wilful and forlorn,—a complex mixture; yet she must be made, as Miss Rehan made her, sympathetic and winning,—a virtuous, ingenuous, refined girl struggling against violent passion to maintain self-esteem and maidenly reserve. In a long experience of the Stage I do not recall a more affecting image of gentle womanhood than the *Helena* of that actress was when seeking to break away from the wrangling of the lovers in the forest, dejected and submissive, asking only that she might be allowed to go, and saying, in the soft accents of hopeless sorrow, “You see how simple and how fond I am.”

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The sudden though not altogether unexpected death of Ada Rehan, whose intimate friendship I had the honor and happiness of enjoying during many years, while not a loss to the Stage, since she had long retired from active professional life and was resolutely deter-

mined never to act again, was a signal loss to society and a cause of abiding sorrow to a wide circle of friends. She was a lovely woman and in the realm of comedy a great actress, and the nobility of her character was equalled only by the goodness of her life. She parted from me in the room in which I am now writing, in which I heard her voice for the last time, and in which I wrote the Elegy that I venture to insert in this place,—not knowing whether I shall ever again have opportunity thus to commemorate, however insufficiently, one who gave so much happiness to the world, and who so entirely deserved affection and honor:

## HAUD IMMEMOR.

ADA REHAN.—DIED, JANUARY 8, 1916.

I think I am not all bereft  
 Of her, so dear,  
 For when she went away she left  
 Her laughter here.

A spirit, in this room it dwells,  
 And ev'ry night,  
 When I sit here alone, it tells  
 Of her delight;

Her joy in life, that was so wild,  
 For, all her days,  
 She never ceased to be a child  
 In her blithe ways;



A child, and yet a woman too,  
 Could love, could weep:  
 Her heart was pure, her friendship true,  
 Her passion deep.

Her gentle laughter, soft and low,  
 Is in this air:  
 None else can hear it, but I know  
 That it is there;

And there, to make my soul rejoice,  
 Is one sweet word  
 She whispered, in the loveliest voice  
 I ever heard—

“Remember!”— Death may set me free  
 From all regret,  
 But not while life remains to me  
 Can I forget!

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#### LATER REVIVALS.

Since the Daly presentment of this comedy in 1888 five productions of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” aside from the revivals of that one, have been accomplished on the New York Stage, three of which have been shown in other cities. On October 29, 1888, the play was presented, in a conventional manner, at the old Star Theatre (Broadway and Thirteenth Street), by John Albaugh’s Travelling Company,—Edmond

D. Lyons appearing as *Bottom*, Edward J. Henley as *Lysander*, Katherine Alvord as *Helena*, and Minnie Seligman as *Hermia*. On October 8, 1900, Louis James (1842-1910) and Kathryn Kidder produced it, at the Grand Opera House,—James acting *Bottom* and Miss Kidder *Helena*. On October 26, 1903, the occasion being that of the opening of the New Amsterdam Theatre, N. C. Goodwin appeared in it as *Bottom*,—Ida Conquest acting *Helena* and Florence Rockwell *Hermia*. Neither of those ventures was important. The Albaugh presentation remained visible for two weeks and then disappeared. James was a capital actor, and to give a conventional, burly, amusing performance of *Bottom* was to him a matter of his "journal course." The comedy, when shown at the New Amsterdam, was set in rich, elaborate, and effective scenery and was performed in three acts. Goodwin is an exceptionally good actor, thoroughly trained in good traditions of his profession, and, in many parts, intrinsically comic and sometimes delightful. It was expected that he would give more than a good performance of *Bottom*, but the part completely eluded him: his appearance in it was a complete failure and, after a few dismal repetitions, the play was dropped from his repertory.

## ANNIE RUSSELL'S PRODUCTION.

The opening of the Astor Theatre, New York, September 21, 1906, was signalized by a production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," made by the managers of that theatre, Messrs. Wagenhals & Kemper. Miss Annie Russell, an actress of English origin but exclusively American training, acted *Puck*, and was gay, agile, and frisky, much in the manner of the nimble *Demon* of the old style "Black Crook" Ballet. *Puck*, though a busy part, is subsidiary in the play, and, except that it provides opportunity for the manifestation of a sprightly, mischievous, frolicsome spirit, possesses no charm that should attract an actor of fine ability to undertake its representation. There is no obvious reason why a female should play it, and probably the only reason why a female ever elected, or was assigned, to play it is that *Puck* is most effective when assumed by a person whose figure is slight and handsome and whose temperament is volatile—as commonly happens with young women. The most that any player can accomplish with the part is an exhibition of physical agility and vital, elfish, exuberant delight in the mischievous activities of a droll deviltry. Miss Russell's acting had usually manifested a sentimental temperament and a finical style, but as *Puck* she was moderately vivacious and pleasing. The only Ameri-



can star actress who had preceded her in this character was the beautiful Laura Keene, 1859.

The scenic embellishment of the play made incidental to Miss Russell's emergence in it did not rival the earlier pageantry of either Hayes or Daly, but it was full of light and color, diversified with effective groupings, opulent with handsome Grecian costumes, and pervaded with an atmosphere of joyous though excessively noisy animation. More emphasis was laid on the element of spectacle than on that of acting,—a practice which, perhaps, is necessary to make this comedy acceptable to the general public. The scene of the Fairy Circle, showing the slumber of the *Queen*, the "translation" of *Bottom*, and the enchantment which follows *Titania's* awakening, was exceptionally beautiful. In her professional associates Miss Russell was unfortunate, the acting, in general, being incompetent and deplorably inferior. *Bottom*, himself an exaggerated eccentricity, was assumed by John Bunny (18—1916), and by him was grossly travestied. An actor less interesting, less amusing, and, particularly, less humorous, has seldom been seen and could not readily be imagined as a possibility. He was not funny, even for a moment. On the contrary, he was hard, gross, vulgar, drearily commonplace, offensively blatant: nevertheless he subsequently obtained world-wide popularity and was, by the multitude, considered

supremely comical. This acceptance of himself as an actor he owed to the exhibition of his large, pumpkin-like face in Motion Picture displays—a form of spectacle to which he chanced to be physically suitable and to which, during his latter years, he happily restricted his industry. In the character of *Bottom* he presented a burly rustic, loutish yet shrewd, hard and wide-awake, loud in speech, blustering in manner, quite devoid of appropriate character, art, and comicality. As an example of his stage business it may be mentioned that after *Bottom's* awakening he took some grass from his pouch and affected to be about to eat it. His most intelligent acting was shown after he had been provided with the ass's head,—which chanced to be an uncommonly well constructed and effective stage property,—but he never even indicated the unconscious humor and the egregious and broadly comic self-importance of *Bottom*.

One melodious voice—and only one—was heard in the whole course of the representation, aside from that of Miss Russell. It is surprising how little attention has been given by actors, in recent years, to the cultivation and use of voice. The art of speaking easily, clearly, and effectively was, on this occasion, well exemplified by Miss Ina Brooks, who intelligently and gracefully impersonated *Titania*. Two spouters of the barn-storming order, Edwin Mordaunt and

Atkins Lawrence, vociferated the language of *Theseus* and *Egeus* in a way "to tear a cat." That crude, boisterous method,—always in disfavor with histrionic artists since before Shakespeare wrote against it,—has ceased to impress anybody except the lowest groundlings, and the exemplars of it have become superfluous.

#### THE GRANVILLE BARKER PRESENTMENT.

On February 16, 1915, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" was presented at Wallack's Theatre by the English actor and manager Granville Barker in what has been loftily vaunted as the "modern" manner. As a performance of Shakespeare's lovely poetic play the presentment was a desecration, but it provided a representative example of the nauseous admixture of mental decadence and crotchety humbug absurdly designated "progressive" and foolishly accepted by irrational persons and by others who seek to run with every vagary of the hour,—fearing to protest against pretentious quackery lest they should be reprehended as "reactionary," "hidebound," and "not up to date."

The fundamental purpose of the votaries of "progress" in the Theatre,—the Max Reinhardts, Gordon Craigs, Richard Ordynskis, Granville Barkers, etc., prodigies "new hatched to the woful time,"—is, assump-



tively, Improvement. That, in itself, is a right and admirable purpose and one which every sensible lover of the Theatre approves. By all means let us have all the *improvement* possible: let us discard every wrong convention, every *obstructive* tradition, every curable defect that impairs the efficiency of the Stage! Many persons have sought to accomplish this result, and some were laboring for it long before any of those mushroom votaries of "reform" emerged. Examination of "modernist" methods, however, while it discloses employment (without credit) of expedients and methods that are not new,—some of them, indeed, having been old when Shakespeare was an actor!—reveals a deplorable proclivity for frivolous and fantastic innovation.

A just estimate of what the Barker presentment actually accomplished will be indicated by a sketch of the spectacle that was shown. Changes had been made in the construction of the stage and in the methods of lighting. Within the regular proscenium opening a smaller opening was formed by the use of a light framework of wood, covered with canvas or heavy linen, which was gilded. The open space thus formed was about thirty feet wide and about eighteen feet high. The two lower stage boxes had been removed and a platform had been constructed, extending forward from the stage proper and cover-

ing the musicians' pit and also, at the right and left, the spaces formerly occupied by those boxes. The top level of this platform or supplementary stage was, at the front, a little less than three feet above the floor of the auditorium, and the face of it was so close to the front row of the orchestra seats that the occupants of those seats touched it with their feet: when, at the close of the performance of the first play produced,—“The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife,”—one of the characters, a blind fiddler, came to the edge of this platform and sat upon it, his bare feet were, practically, in the lap of the spectator sitting before him. The platform stretched forward about twelve feet from the regular stage line. On about that line, or about four feet in front of the old curtain line, there were two steps, each about eight or ten inches high, extending from side to side and connecting the front platform with the level of the true stage. The whole surface of this structure was sheathed with canvas of a slate-gray hue,—the cold, flat color usually seen on the decks of our harbor ferry boats when newly painted. The spaces, right and left, which formerly had been occupied by the stage boxes, were utilized by the performers, in making entrances and exits. The proscenium opening was closed by a drop-curtain, of somewhat dingy, unbleached linen.

All footlights and side-strips had been discarded.

The stage was lighted by a quadruple calcium, directed from the rear of the upper gallery, which suffused the scenes with a cold, hard, water-white light, exceedingly trying to the eyes. This calcium was supplemented with seven "bunch-lights," each comprising four yellow electric lamps of, apparently, not less than the sixty-watt capacity, each group of those lights being placed at the rear end of a short funnel. The seven funnels thus indicated were fastened to the front of the balcony, at intervals of about twenty feet, and all of them were focussed on the stage. Other light, during the performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," was, in some of the scenes,—notably those in the wood,—shed from above, in the flies.

The results obtained by those changes in the construction of the stage and in the methods of lighting it were bad. Illusion was destroyed. Dramatic effect was nullified. The performers, hampered by unsuitable conditions, were made to appear anxiously and uselessly laborious, and the representations were invested with an atmosphere at once amateurish and freakish. The object sought in this "advanced" method of lighting the stage I understand to be simulation of the diffused light of day. That object was not gained. Every competent artist, every close observer, knows that in the open light of day, out of doors, high lights and low lights, shadows, shadings,



and minute lines become visible in the human face which ordinarily are not visible within doors or under artificial light. The open light of day, however, cannot be artificially produced, and this "diffused" lighting method totally failed, its effect being to *flatten* the faces of the performers and dissipate facial expression,—the thing imperatively essential to be shown, and to be intensified, by stage-lighting in association with make-up. In only a few instances were the players made up in such a way as to accommodate their painted faces to the quality of the light shed upon them. In most instances their faces appeared flat and almost mask-like. The notable exceptions were those of O. P. Heggie, Ian Maclaren, and Ernest Cossart.

The theatrical company that appeared in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" was a good one,—though it was seen to better advantage in other plays. The leading member of it, Lillah McCarthy (Mrs. Granville Barker), is an Irishwoman, interesting in herself and expert as an actress. Her appearance and demeanor indicate exceptional force of character and uncommon executive faculty. In person she is large and commanding; in physical type apparently a blonde, with gray eyes. She possesses a good voice and knows how to use it. Her face is somewhat immobile; her manner monotonous. She is self-pos-

sessed and authoritative, seeming to have had considerable experience. As *Helena*, though a little heavy, she looked well, in loose Grecian drapery, moved with grace, spoke sweetly,—sometimes with exceptional fluency and moving earnestness,—and cleverly simulated the ways of a lithe girl, without, however, creating illusion: fine intelligence and rightly governed feeling characterized her performance. Her leading professional associate, O. P. Heggie, while intrinsically utilitarian and destitute of personal magnetism, is a highly talented, competent performer, well trained, amply experienced, agreeably self-confident, and, in technical mechanism, exceptionally proficient. A conspicuous merit of his acting is the continuous sustenance of an assumed character: he maintains an invariable identity. This actor was first seen as *Maximilian Cutts* in the repulsive play of “The New Sin,” presented, October 15, 1912, at Wallack’s Theatre, and later (October 26, 1914) at the same house, as *Uriah Heep*, in Louis N. Parker’s expert theatrical synopsis of the novel of “David Copperfield,” called “The Highway of Life.” Both those performances were commonplace. In “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” he appeared as *Peter Quince*, a part which provides no opportunity for anything more than the perfunctory assumption of an office which *Quince* considers to be one of tremendous responsibility and importance,—

that of stage-manager. The actor showed himself entirely and easily capable of acting much better parts than *Quince*. Shakespeare seems to have foreseen the "modern" producer of his plays, when he caused *Quince* and *Bottom* to discuss and arrange the "business" of the wall. "We must have a wall in the great chamber," observes the sapient *Quince*, "for *Pyramus* and *Thisby*, says the story, did talk through a wall." "Some man or other," replies the omniscient *Bottom*, "must present wall; and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall: or let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall *Pyramus* and *Thisby* whisper."

The play was presented in two acts, of almost equal length. In the acting of it there was no poetic atmosphere, no suggestion of poetry, aside from that which sometimes naturally resulted from romantic situations and lovely language. The words, in general, were so spoken as about equally to annoy and disgust the listener. The performances of *Theseus* by Eric Blind, *Demetrius* by Ian Maclaren, *Lysander* by Walter Creighton, and *Hermia* by Eva Leonard-Boyne were utilitarian and commonplace. During the Interlude *Theseus*, *Hippolita*, and the courtiers sprawled on couches ranged across the front of the stage, with their backs to the audience, so that, practically, their speeches were inaudible except to them-



selves. The Interlude was played on an elevated platform of the palace room, accessible by black steps, and visible to the spectators, looking over *Theseus* and his Court. On this platform, after the Athenian "mechanicals" had ended their play and the mortals had all retired, among short, ugly pillars painted black and silver, the "fairies" of *Oberon* and *Titania* closed the melancholy exhibition by performing a saltatory exercise called "a Morris Dance,"—one by one leaving the scene.

Ernest Cossart, who appeared as *Bottom*, played with assurance and self-complacency, the display of those attributes, however, being solely personal to himself, not at all to the character that he had undertaken to represent. There was nothing interesting in himself, nothing intrinsically humorous,—every comic effect that was caused proceeding from the situations and the words, not from the actor. The ass's head was a well-made stage property, and the performer used it in an occasionally droll way,—as any child might have done who had ever seen a donkey. The "Wood" scene displayed a large, grass-covered mound, in the centre of the stage. Adjacent trees were indicated by long festoons of gray cloth, suspended from the flies, and among these eccentricities of foliage the performers walked, sometimes in front of the mound, coming down upon the extended

supplementary stage (which, in fact, was only an inferior variant of the old-fashioned "apron," which still exists in a few old theatres), sometimes behind it. *Bottom*, when he went to sleep, rolled down back of this mound and so vanished. The "fairy ring" was a large circular structure, suggestive of a heavy wreath, composed, apparently, of blue celluloid, embossed with yellow and pink ornamentation. This absurd object was suspended by wires, high above the mound, and through the centre of it depended a festoon of gray gauze, in which hung a loose, irregular cluster of small electric lights of several colors, red, green, etc.: beneath this the fairies gathered and *Titania* slumbered.

The personal appearance and deportment of fairies and elves are matters of fancy and conjecture. It seems, however,—and certainly it is true for the purposes of Shakespeare's dream-play,—that as far as possible they should be represented in such a way as to suggest delicate, elusive, airy creatures, who, while obviously they feel human emotions and act from human motives, are purged of human grossness, are transcendent of mundane materiality, are finer, more ethereal, more dainty than men and women; creatures, in short, of which the form is gossamer and the spirit poetical. That, surely, is not an irrational ideal of beings who flit and "wander everywhere,"

“Over hill, over dale,  
 Thorough bush, thorough brier,  
 Over park, over pale,  
 Thorough flood, thorough fire,”

beings who “war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,” combat with the newt, the blind-worm, the weaving spider, and the snail, dwell in “the quaint mazes in the wanton green,” sport in “the spangled starlight sheen,” “creep into acorn-cups and hide them there,” and couch them on banks

“ . . . where the wild thyme blows,  
 Where ox-lips and the nodding violet grows,  
 Quite over-canopied with lush woodbine,  
 With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine.”

In the visualization of Granville Barker's erratic fancy those evanescent creatures appeared in the persons, male and female, of children and adults, of various sizes, with “hair” made of ravelled rope and twisted tape, stiffened with glue; their bodies encased, variously, in cloth, leather, and gauze garments, and all,—clothing, shoes, sandals, “hair,” faces and hands,—gilded! The effect was much as though a considerable number of steam-heat radiators, cast in human form, had become mechanically animate. The only



exception among those galvanized metallic "fairies" was *Puck*. That character was assumed by Cecil Cameron, a person of medium size, considerable agility, and heavy on his feet. This *Puck* was attired in a bright red body garment and trousers reaching to the ankles: those and the upper parts of his feet were bare and he wore low slippers of red morocco leather. His face was made up with yellowish-white paint, the cheeks being reddened. He wore a wig, made, apparently, of very coarse hair or rope yarn, which had been stiffened so that the hairs stood on end, and the head presented somewhat the appearance of a huge chestnut burr, bright yellow in color, with large red berries, about the size and appearance of haws, entangled on it. In this amazing garb this performer cavorted, making most weighty and noisy thumps and bumps, as he jumped about the stage. His exertions were vigorous and he perspired freely: also, on the occasion when I saw his exhibition of "fairy" antics, he unluckily scratched one of his ankles, so that, as he pranced down to the edge of the platform, a few drops of blood were visible, trickling down the ankle, commingled with little rivulets of sweat. These are disagreeable details, but I am describing what I saw, not what I wished to see or to describe. This was the "progressive" perform-

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ance of *Puck*, the "new," the "modern," the "up to date."

Horace Braham, the representative of *Oberon*, besides wearing the gilded steam-radiator raiment which I have designated, had daubed his upper eyelids with a glossy, luminous green paint, of a shade seen on certain beetles and serpents, and as he rapidly and almost continually blinked his eyes he was a most obnoxious object. This performer portrayed *Oberon*, the "king of shadows," the beautiful figment of a poet's dream, as an effeminate and much bored automaton: anything more contemptible than the thin, inexpressive, unintelligent, and at times unintelligible delivery of the text by this wretched simulacrum of an actor, and likewise by a kindred non-entity, Miss Isabel Jeans, who spoiled the part of *Titania*, it would be impossible to conceive. There was not one touch of feeling, one glimmer of poetry, one suggestion of imagination, one hint of romance, about either of the Fairy monarchs or their subjects. Many things in Art are open to differences of rational opinion and judgment; others are mere matters of obvious fact. The visitor to any large lunatic asylum can ascertain that among the unfortunate inmates of that desolate retreat there are some who sincerely believe that their crazy illusions are sane and that the only madmen are those who dif-

fer from them. It is even so with some of the decadent followers and advocates of the vaunted "progressive stage art," and with the "Cubists" and "Futurists" of painting. It would be unjust to classify Granville Barker as actuated by such pitiful sincerity. His productions and his writings indicate him as a shrewd, sensible, calculating speculative theatrical manager, proficient in his business, able to do many things in the Theatre intelligently and well, who deems it expedient and advantageous, because profitable, to put himself "into the trick of singularity," and who,—with some natural inclination toward fads,—is willing to gull "the fool multitude" to the top of its bent. Barnum did it with great success, and if Barnum why not Barker?

The advocates of the "progressive" doctrine exemplified in this production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" declare that such exhibitions are desirable because contributory to improvement in stage representations. When this experimental innovator began his season at Wallack's Theatre several of the public-spirited, influential citizens of New York who had generously and splendidly coöperated in founding the New Theatre,—a magnificent enterprise which ought to have succeeded and which if judiciously managed would have succeeded, with even less than the financial



foundation and support which it received from its promoters,—signed and circulated a document, dated January 11, 1915, containing these remarkable words:

“In the line of their hope that they could continue to be of some service in advancing the cause of drama in New York, the founders of the New Theatre have encouraged Granville Barker to bring to New York some of his recent productions. Mr. Barker’s productions have had an international importance. They have marked *a very distinct advance* in the producer’s art, and *certainly have furnished the most notable contribution of the period* toward the progress of the Drama in England. . . . Mr. Barker has staged Shakespeare in a way that has created the keenest interest, both because of the spirit of the production and of the originality of the scenic conceptions.”

Those statements, sanctioned by leading, representative, influential persons, are no less pitiable for their ignorance and folly than deplorable for their potentially mischievous effect. The “period” in which this wondrous service was done is not specified. The pretence that Granville Barker’s productions show *any* “*advance* in the producer’s art” is preposterous. At their best (which, in this country, has thus far been shown not in Shakespeare but in a production of G. B. Shaw’s “The Doctor’s Dilemma”) they indicate nothing higher than a commercial purpose to profit, if pos-

sible, by ministering to a craze for "something different," merely because it *is* different. The propensity for fads and experiments explains, in large part, the failure of the New Theatre: the methods used there were not identical; the animating spirit was.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" should be presented as a dreamlike spectacle: it should be made to move with ease and celerity through a sequence of handsome scenes, imbued with an atmosphere of poetry, charming with drollery,—never rough, obtrusive, or boisterous,—and every available means, spiritual and mechanical, should be used to create and sustain this effect. In the Barker presentment of it, since that was made by a skilful manager with the professional coöperation of experienced actors, there were a few—though only a few—features of merit; and it must not be forgotten that Shakespeare does much for *every* presentment of his plays. As a whole, however, this ostentatious and conceited exhibition of grotesque "novelty" was the very apotheosis of "parlor theatricals." Illusion was never created. The absurd scenery was destructive of all right effect. It is impossible for the mind to abandon itself to the enchantment of the acted drama and allow itself to drift with the representation, self-forgetful and delighted, when it is continually compelled to consider that trees are indicated by long festoons of gray cloth, wooded banks

by wooden benches, and flitting sylphs by prancing gnomes that no more suggest fairies than so many coal-scuttles would!

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## NOTE.

The last performance given in Wallack's Theatre was given by Granville Barker's Company, May 1, 1915. The plays performed were "Androcles and the Lion" and "The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife." An address was impressively delivered by Augustus Thomas. Speeches were made by Granville Barker and Lillah McCarthy, and Rose Coghlan, made-up as *Lady Teazle*, wearing the dress that she wore when playing that part on the night of the opening of that theatre,—January 4, 1882,—recited an Epilogue, by Oliver Herford. A little later Wallack's Theatre was demolished. *Fuit Ilium.*



## V.

### KING HENRY IV.

#### PART ONE AND PART TWO.

*"Battles, and the breath  
Of stormy war and violent death."*

—WORDSWORTH.

*"Sport, that wrinkled Care derides,  
And Laughter, holding both his sides."*

—MILTON.

*"Remorse—she ne'er forsakes us!  
A blood-hound stanch, she tracks our rapid step  
Through the wild labyrinth of youthful frenzy,  
Unheard, perchance, until old age hath tamed us;  
Then in our lair, when Time hath chill'd our joints  
And maim'd our hope of combat or of flight,  
We hear her deep-mouth'd bay, announcing all  
Of wrath and woe and punishment that bides us."*

—SCOTT.

#### HISTORICAL CONSTITUENTS OF THE PLAY.

IN the fourteenth century the people of England would tolerate no monarch who was not possessed of an imperious will. King Richard the Second (1366-1400),—who reigned from 1377 to 1399,—although

occasionally capable of energetic action, was imprudent and weak, and the turbulence of the age in which he lived is strikingly illustrated in the story of his deposition. That story has been pathetically told by Shakespeare in his play of "King Richard II.," and the consequences of King Richard's dethronement have been portrayed by him, with incomparable felicity, in his richly freighted drama of "King Henry IV.,"—which is comedy as well as history, and which, in the character of *Falstaff*, contains the greatest humorous creation in English literature.

Henry, Duke of Hereford, had publicly charged Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, with having said treasonable words against King Richard, and Norfolk had fiercely resented the charge and had proposed the arbitrament of a duel, to which the King, distrustful of them both, readily gave his sanction. The lists were set, September 17, 1398, at Coventry. The King was present, attended by his Court. The combatants rode into the field. But just as the fight was about to begin the King threw down his truncheon, as a signal to stop it; and he then decreed that both the champions should be banished from England,—Hereford for ten years and Norfolk for ever. Norfolk died at Venice, September, 1399. Hereford went no further than Paris, from

which place he watched the progress of affairs at home till the opportunity occurred for his auspicious return. He had not long to wait. His father, John of Gaunt, died in the spring of 1399, and King Richard thereupon seized the Duchy of Lancaster, Henry's inheritance,—a tyrannous action, of which the manifest iniquity was generally recognized and condemned. That injustice was only one of many. The King had become widely unpopular. He could not control the fierce barons, and his exactions were oppressive to the people. Henry of Hereford, in that state of public affairs, found an ample pretext for action. He embarked from Port Blanc, in Brittany, with a following of sixty persons, landed at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire, July 4, 1399, and made his way toward the border of Wales. The King was absent, quelling a rebellion in Ireland. Almost everybody favored Hereford's cause, and Henry, who had come only for his dukedom, finding himself welcomed as the savior of the kingdom, determined to seize the crown. The struggle was a brief one. The man of will easily prevailed over the man of show, and in a short time King Richard, a miserable prisoner, was dead, of starvation, at Pomfret Castle, and Henry, Duke of Lancaster, was King of England, as Henry the Fourth. He ascended the throne on September 30, 1399, and he



reigned until his death, March 20, 1413,—the period of his rule being an incessant fever of solicitude for himself and of dissension for his people. A usurper, possessed by craft and violence of his cousin's birth-right, he lived in continual disquietude, and his policy was ever vigilant to keep the minds of men busy with foreign wars and to distract attention from inquiry into his title. Well might Shakespeare cause him to exclaim, in the bitterness of his spirit, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown!" King Henry died in his forty-sixth year, in the Jerusalem Chamber of Westminster Abbey, and was buried in Canterbury Cathedral, where his tomb may still be seen, surmounted with a recumbent effigy of him, remarkable for its fidelity as a portrait and for the elaborate and skilful ornamentation with which it is furnished.

But King Henry was "made of sterner stuff" than poor King Richard, and, although adverse factions might trouble him, they could neither subdue nor fright him. On landing at Ravenspur he had been joined by Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, and to that powerful nobleman and his associates he was indebted for the capture of King Richard,—accomplished at Flint Castle, near Chester,—and for the speedy advancement of his ambitious and unscrupulous plans to their complete fulfilment. The

Earl of Northumberland, his younger brother, Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester, and other noblemen, to whom Henry was thus laid under obligation, expected ample rewards for their assistance in making him King, and when they did not receive all that they asked for, but, on the contrary, found themselves treated with ingratitude and coldness, they soon fell away from him, and they entered into a conspiracy with Owen Glendower, of Wales, and Archibald, Earl of Douglas, of Scotland, to dethrone him and to establish in his place Edward Mortimer, Earl of March, whom King Richard the Second had named as his legitimate successor. King Henry saw his danger and was quick to meet it. He came suddenly upon his foes, near Shrewsbury, on July 21, 1403, and, in one of the most fierce and sanguinary battles of that age, he defeated them, with great slaughter. In that fight perished, at the age of thirty-seven, Henry Percy, surnamed Hotspur, son to the Earl of Northumberland, a gallant soldier, and in that fight the Prince of Wales, afterward King Henry the Fifth, began his splendid career as a warrior. The Earl of Northumberland was not present, and subsequently he submitted to King Henry and obtained a pardon, but later, 1405, he joined a new conspiracy, which was discomfited by a stratagem more ingenious than honorable, and he

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ultimately fell, in a minor battle, fought on Bramham Moor, in Yorkshire, in 1407. The conspiracy that was crushed at Shrewsbury is the subject of the First Part of Shakespeare's "King Henry IV.," and the rebellion that the Earl of Westmoreland outwitted, by a disingenuous promise, is the moving theme of the Second Part. "These two plays," says Dr. Johnson, "will appear to every reader, who shall peruse them without ambition of critical discoveries, to be so connected that the second is merely a sequel to the first; to be two, only because they are too long to be one."

### THE VARIOUS CONTRASTED CHARACTERS.

These characters are in strong dramatic contrast all the while, as the action proceeds: *King Henry the Fourth*, the politician, astute, resolute, worldly, intent to maintain the regal authority that he has usurped; *Prince Henry*, the merry-maker, generous, frank, wild, but true, biding his time to rule, and meanwhile bent to enjoy; and *Falstaff*, the waggish worldling, sapient, sensuous, jovial, living only for profit and pleasure, and turning all things to laughter. Against these and around them are grouped many types of human nature, each true, and all as obvious in the world to-day as ever in



the world of the past. Foremost among them is *Hotspur*, fiery, splenetic, intrepid, expeditious, pre-occupied in manner, given to a certain rather burly humor, and fond of nothing so much as of war. Upon him the poet has lavished peculiar care, to the end that *Prince Henry* may be made the more glorious through victory over a noble and splendid antagonist. The old *Earl*, his father, is drawn as more a schemer, careworn and cautious. *Worcester* is the disturbing spirit, anxious, restless, busy, valorous, and determined upon the accomplishment of the revolution that he has planned. *Douglas* is simply the stalwart warrior. In *Westmoreland* there are attributes of the crafty statesman as well as of the dauntless soldier, and he is a model of fidelity in friendship. *Owen Glendower*, equally formidable and simple, is swayed by superstition, and he believes himself the man of destiny, who must in all things succeed. *Prince John*, self-possessed, energetic, narrow and hard, resembles his father, without, however, possessing the father's audacity, mental force, or large grasp of practical affairs. The *Chief Justice*, upright, firm, and honorable, unites all the virtues of personal and social respectability. *Mistress Quickly*, Hostess of the Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap (the actual tavern of that name was burnt down in the great fire that ravaged London

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in 1666), is the kind, vulgar, bustling, ignorant, self-sufficient, garrulous dame of the kitchen and pantry, a perfect emblem of her class. *Bardolph*, *Peto*, and *Pistol*, who hover about *Falstaff*, are plain rogues, each with his eccentricity,—*Pistol*, the hectoring bully, aggressive of manner and grandiloquent of speech, “full of strange oaths,” being the most amusing. *Poins* is a good fellow, though commonplace, and is of a merry heart and a careless life. The two country justices, *Shallow* and *Silence*, represent perennial forms of senile shrewdness commingled with folly. The invisible recruits that are the cause of much sport in the First Part become material beings in the Second. Shakespeare, following Holinshed, has confused Edward, Earl of March, who was heir to the throne, after King Richard the Second, with Sir Edward Mortimer, his uncle, who married Hotspur’s sister. The Earl, in real life, was a boy of ten years, and a state prisoner, at the period of the Northumberland revolt.

#### DATE OF THE COMPOSITION.

Shakespeare’s historical plays of “King Henry IV.” and “King Henry V.” are, to a very slight extent, founded on an earlier play, of which the authorship has not been ascertained, called “The Famous Vic-

tories of Henry the Fifth, containing the honourable battell of Agincourt." That old play is known to have been written later than 1580. Dyce rightly declares it to be "utterly worthless," but he mentions that it was very popular and that it passed through several editions. Richard Tarleton (1560?-1588), the famous Jester of Queen Elizabeth's Court,—believed to have been in Shakespeare's remembrance when he made *Hamlet* speak so tenderly of *Yorick*,—acted in it, as the <sup>Deriv</sup>*Judge*. It was written in prose, but parts of it were printed to resemble, typographically, verse. Shakespeare was not really indebted to it for anything more than suggestion that the subject of King Henry the Fourth's austerity and Prince Henry's youthful frolics was a good one for treatment in dramatic form. Both parts of "King Henry IV." were, it is believed, written between 1596 and 1598. The First Part was published in the latter year. The title, in the first edition, is: "The History of Henrie the Fourth, with the Battell at Shrewsburie, betweene the King and Lord Henry Percy, surnamed Henrie Hotspur of the North. With the humourous conceits of Sir John Falstalfe. Printed by P. S. for Andrew Wise." Five editions of it followed, prior to the Folio of 1623. In the second edition, 1599, "Falstaffe" takes the place of "Falstalfe." Part Second was first published in 1600, with this title: "The Second Part of



Henrie the Fourth, continuing to his death, and coronation of Henry the Fift. With the humours of Sir John Falstaffe, and swaggering Pistoll. As it hath been sundrie times publikely acted by the Right Honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his servants. Written by William Shakspeare. Printed by V. S. for Andrew Wise and William Aspley." The same publishers sent forth another edition in the same year, to repair an omission,—the First Scene of Act Third. No further publication of Part Second occurred until the appearance of the Folio of 1623, in which that Part is considerably amplified, presumably from the manuscript prompt-book used in the theatre. Both Parts, it is believed, were written between 1596 and 1598.

#### STAGE VERSIONS.

Whether, in old times, "King Henry IV." was acted in strict accordance with the original text or in a condensed version we do not know: it, probably, was acted substantially as printed. The First Part, consisting of 3,116 lines, is in five acts, which contain nineteen scenes, requiring fourteen sets for their display. The drama is exceptional in its pervasively intrinsic dramatic quality, the movement of it being almost continuous. In the early British Theatre it is probable that nothing was

omitted. Later the usage changed. The only adaptation, however, that is truly requisite to fit this drama to the modern Stage,—aside from the omission or alteration of some offensively coarse language,—is a slight curtailment of its text, so that it can be performed within a reasonable time. The first scene of the Third Act is not absolutely essential to the action, and sometimes it is excised: it was customarily discarded in the later British theatres prior to 1853, when William Creswick, playing *Hotspur*, restored it: Phelps also restored it, playing *Falstaff*, 1864, at Drury Lane. The scene at the palace of the *Archbishop of York*, Act IV., sc. 4, is, I believe, always omitted. Many of the oaths and some of the vulgar phrases which occur in the quartos of this play do not appear in the Folio. It is easily possible, without detriment to Shakespeare's work, to arrange a text substantially free from verbal grossness. The version printed in French's "Standard Drama" (No. LXXV.) is acceptable, but that contained in the Memorial Theatre Edition (1894), edited by Charles Edward Flower (1830-1892), is a better one, containing more of the original text, and being more helpful to students and much more practically useful to actors: the passages customarily omitted are, in that version, printed in smaller type, with proper explanatory remarks.—The words of *Falstaff*, in the scene after the robbery at Gad's Hill, when he is

shown to be such a monstrous liar, are, in Shakespeare's text, "By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye." In the usage of the actors, from time immemorial, *Falstaff*, before speaking that line, exclaims: "Do ye think I did not *know ye?*" The emendation is a good one. By whom it was made we do not know. Hackett, among others, caused a splendidly comic effect with it.

#### CHARACTER, AND ACTORS, OF *KING HENRY*.

There are many beauties in "King Henry IV.,"—the beauties of movement, incident, variety, picture, thought, humor, pathos, and sonorous and splendid diction,—but the crowning beauty of the play is its wonderful delineation of character. More than forty persons are depicted in it, most of them at full length. *King Henry the Fourth* is drawn with peculiar fidelity. At his coronation he was thirty-three years old,—tall, stately, self-contained, having a countenance remarkable for composure and firmness, and a manner characterized by gravity, distinction, and, when he chose, winning courtesy. His face, as it appears in the authentic portraits of him, is both astute and imperious, distinctively that of the politician and the ruler. The jaws are prominent, the nose is aquiline and large, the eyes



are stern, and it is known that his voice was harsh and, at times, savage. He was speciously meek in the days in which he wished to court popularity, but when he had succeeded he laid aside the mask of urbanity and ruled with an iron hand. As Duke of Hereford he so bore himself as to fill the public fancy, but as King of England he made himself feared rather than loved, using, when he deemed it necessary, all the wiles of craft, but predominating by ruthless self-assertion and personal force. That was the only sure way; for the monarch, in that age, who did not crush his enemies was inevitably their victim. Shakespeare has caused *King Henry*, in the colloquy with his eldest son, before the march to Shrewsbury, to make an exposition alike of his character, policy, circumstances, and feelings so complete and so lucid that no student of human nature can fail to comprehend them, as well with wonder at the dramatist's subtlety as with delight at his exquisite style. When sickness came upon King Henry he suffered remorse for his usurpation of the crown, and also, doubtless, for his treatment of the hapless King Richard,—a grievous condition which Shakespeare, in the solemn and pathetic scene in which *Prince Henry* takes the crown from the father whom he supposes to be dead, has portrayed with deep sympathy and tenderness. The Prince's premature seizure of

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the crown is briefly related in Holinshed's "Chronicle," but even upon that meagre basis the dramatic poet has reared a scene of strong emotion and beautiful dignity, nowhere matched save in his own pages.

The first performer of *King Henry the Fourth* of whose acting in the part there is authentic record was William Wintersell (16—1679), who played it, 1667, in association with Burt as *Prince Henry*. Contemporary judges esteemed Wintersell a judicious actor, in comedy as well as tragedy, and an excellent teacher of the art of acting. Description of his *King Henry* has not been found. Kynaston, notwithstanding his alleged effeminacy and an occasional assumed whining quality of voice which his associate George Powell told him was nauseous, gave a specially impressive performance of *King Henry*. His severe, incisive, trenchant, *whispered* utterance of the angry monarch's threatening command to *Hotspur*,

"Send me your prisoners with the speediest means,  
Or you shall hear in such a kind from me  
As will displease you,"

is said to have been thrilling in its effect of dangerous menace. Kynaston, in youth, greatly excelled in acting female characters. His personations of them were so fine, especially "in moving compassion and pity,"

that Downes wrote of him, after he ceased playing them, "it has since been disputed among the judicious whether *any woman* that succeeded him so sensibly touched the audience as he." However good he may have been as "a woman actor," his greater merit appeared in masculine impersonations, such as *Leon*, in John Fletcher's comedy of "Rule a Wife and Have a Wife." He is specially commended, by Cibber, for "manliness and honest authority," and the same writer instructively says:

"There is a grave and rational majesty in Shakespeare's *Henry the Fourth* [of which] Kynaston was entirely master: here every sentiment came from him as if it had been his own, as if he had himself that instant conceived it, as if he had lost the player and were the real king he personated."

Kynaston acted the *King*, at Lincoln's Inn Fields, about 1695(?). Other players on the British Stage who assumed *King Henry the Fourth* were Edward Berry, 1700; Theophilus Keene, 1706; John Mills, 1714; James Quin, 1721; Anthony Boheme, 1722; William Milward, 1737; ——— Wright, 1738; O—— Cashel, 1746; Luke Sparks, 1747; William Havard, 1762; William Powell, 1764; Joseph Younger, 1774; Spranger Barry, about 1767; Robert Bensley, 1777; ——— Clarke, 1779; Thomas Hull, 1786; James Aickin, 1792; John Pritt Harley,



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1795; J. P. Kemble, 1804; Daniel Egerton, 1824; Thomas Archer, 1839, and Samuel Phelps (Second Part), 1853.

Anthony Boheme, whose person was stately and whose voice was specially effective in pathetic speaking, gave, 1722, a majestic and touching performance of *King Henry*. Milward's personation, 1737, is highly praised by Davies, who says that "in the pathetic scene between him and the *Prince* [Second Part] his countenance was finely expressive of grief and the plaintive tones of his voice were admirably adapted to the character." Spranger Barry, toward the end of his life, when he was emaciated by sickness and pain, nevertheless acted *King Henry*, and was exceedingly effective in his use of pathos. His tall, noble figure was of great advantage to him in this part, and his melodious voice invested the admonition of the dying *King* with great and tender solemnity. Havard was merely respectable in the part. Bensley, formal, severe, and correct, was deficient of royal distinction,—the drill-sergeant rather than the sovereign.

William Powell's performance of *King Henry* is specially commended. The fine talents of that actor were exhibited chiefly in his assumptions of old men and in his use of pathos. He assumed the *King*, in the Second Part, at Covent Garden, January 18, 1764, and in the wonderfully written and deeply

affecting scenes of the Fourth Act he greatly moved his audience. The sympathetic personality of Powell can, perhaps, be inferred from the fact that on the night of his death (July 3, 1769, at Bristol) his compatriots at the local theatre, who chanced to be playing in "King Richard III.," were so deeply affected by their grief that they could scarcely proceed with the performance, and an apology had to be made to the audience.

John Philip Kemble acted *King Henry*, in a revival of the Second Part of "King Henry IV." effected by him, January 17, 1804, at Covent Garden, but he chanced to be ill on the occasion of the first performance and he was unable to make himself generally heard. Some invidious censure of his performance accordingly found its way into print. One dissatisfied auditor of Kemble's *King Henry*, objecting to the impersonation on several grounds, delivered his disparagement in versified form, which is worth citation as a specimen of the stupidity and impertinence to which even the highest achievements of histrionic art are sometimes subjected by ignorant or unscrupulous writers:

"When Bolingbroke, weaken'd by sickness and age,  
Lectur'd Hal, he spoke feebly, no doubt,  
But when Shakespeare brought forward the scene on the stage,  
He meant that *his* King should speak out.

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His precepts so wise and his passions so clear

In pauses and whispers *you* smother.

Do you think 'tis not right that the audience should hear

All that passes 'twixt you and your brother?

We know that you stick very close to costume,

But, here, close to character too;

For 'cause you are sick i' the Jerus'lem room,

You put on the face of a Jew.

At your mantle so fine and your chin so besmear'd

We laugh, when we ought to look grave:

Either give all the rest of your actors a beard,

Or else, please your Majesty, shave!"

On June 25, 1821, Kemble revived "King Henry IV.," Part Second, at Covent Garden, as an incident relevant to the coronation of King George the Fourth, which occurred on July 19, that year, and on that occasion his success was triumphant. His majestic demeanor, intrinsic authority, profound and perfectly controlled feeling, and beautiful elocution, especially in delivery of the solemn and pathetic monitions to the *Prince of Wales*, combined to make his impersonation of the austere but broken and remorseful sovereign magnificently regal and deeply impressive. This was regarded as one of Kemble's greatest achievements.

Macready acted *King Henry the Fourth* in both





*After a Painting by John Jackson, R. A.*

**WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY AS KING HENRY THE FOURTH**

*"What! canst thou not forbear me half an hour?  
Then get thee gone and dig my grave thyself,  
And bid the merry bells ring to thine ear  
That thou art crowned!"*

ACT IV., SC. 4, SECOND PART



parts of the History. In the course of his performance in the First Part he followed the example of Kynaston, uttering the command and threat to *Hotspur*, relative to the prisoners taken at the Battle of Holmedon, in a deep, vibrant, thrilling tone, scarcely above a whisper. When personating the *King* in the Second Part,—which was produced in exceedingly opulent attire, at Covent Garden, June 25, 1821,—his speaking of the mournful soliloquy on Sleep was critically hailed as perfection, and he deeply touched the public heart and made an indelible impression on the public mind by his utterance of the sad, reproachful words of the dying *King*, “Thy wish was father, Harry, to that thought.” In listening to the *Prince’s* explanation and defense of himself Macready employed with moving effect that expedient of “silent acting” which he highly valued and in the use of which he was wonderfully proficient. Particular specification of the details of his stage business and the peculiarities of his method in the portrayals of this character are scanty, but the consensus of contemporary critical judgment declares his performance of *King Henry the Fourth* to have been one of the grandest of his long and illustrious career. The cast of the associate parts, in the Covent Garden revival, was remarkable. It comprised Charles Kemble as *Prince Henry*, William Abbott as *Prince John*, John



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Fawcett as *Falstaff*, William Farren as *Shallow*, John Emery as *Silence*, Daniel Egerton as the *Chief Justice*, William Blanchard as *Pistol*, and Mrs. Davenport as the *Hostess*. Fawcett was not capital as *Falstaff*, but Farren and Emery were superlatively admirable in the two country magistrates. In presenting the Second Part of the History Macready much expanded the closing scene, in order to exhibit and illustrate in detail the Coronation of *King Henry the Fifth*. Four scenes were set for this purpose, the last one showing the Banquet in Westminster Hall, with the entrance and exit of the equestrian Champion,—according to ancient usage at the coronation of the English sovereigns.

### CHARACTER, AND ACTORS, OF *PRINCE HENRY*.

The character of *Prince Henry* has been drawn with peculiar insight and sympathy. That *Prince* is Shakespeare's representative man of action. In the old play, "The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth," upon which, indirectly, are based both "*King Henry IV.*" and "*King Henry V.*," the *Prince* is depicted as a mere swaggering ruffian, while his companions, *Ned*, *Tom*, and *Jocky*,—Sir John Oldcastle,—are blackguards, like himself. When he became *King* he was the model of all excellence, and

such a transformation of conduct and manners,—virtue and wisdom at once replacing levity and folly,—can occur only when the original character is essentially noble and remains unvitiated. Shakespeare, with the intuition of a poet, saw that the wildness of the *Prince's* youth was only the excess of animal spirits, combined with love of adventure and impatience of conventionality, and he has delineated him as invariably honorable and gentle, preserving his natural distinction and superiority amid all the festivities and frolics in which he joins, and merely “humoring the idleness” of his comrades for the sake of transient mirth. His gayety is exuberant, his glee irrepressible: “I am now,” he exclaims, “of all humors that have shown themselves humors since the old days of goodman Adam”: but underneath his careless buoyancy there are goodness of heart, gravity of mind, strength of will, nobility of purpose, keen discernment, and the finest sense of honor. One of Shakespeare’s most subtle touches, indicative of the *Prince's* deep knowledge of himself, and likewise of his perfect honesty, is in the half serious, half bantering talk with *Poins* about the illness of the *King*: “My heart bleeds inwardly that my father is so sick,” but, “if I should weep, every man would think me an hypocrite indeed.” He has led a gay life; he has kept loose company; and he well knows that

“ostentation of sorrow” would be ascribed to any motive but the true one. He is acquainted with the world, and one day he will take his place in it, but in the mean time he will stand before it without even the semblance of affectation, consistent in all things. Prince Henry, born in 1388, was only fifteen when he fought at Shrewsbury, and the incident of his killing Hotspur (1364-1403) is, of course, a fiction. Shakespeare has advanced his age several years, and it is notable that after his martial exploits at Shrewsbury the *Prince* is made to relapse into his old ways of recklessness and revel. Not till he stands at his father’s death-bed, receiving his inheritance of royalty from the dying monarch’s hand, does he discard the frivolities of the man of pleasure and rise to the full stature of his greatness—the greatness of a practical, conscientious ruler of mankind. He is then the *Prince* indeed, and all his follies drop away from him, like a worn-out garment cast aside for ever. His repudiation of *Falstaff*, at the close, has been censured, as indicative of hardness of heart; but it is not so—it is the inevitable consequence of the change which has been consummated in himself. The relations between individuals are not dependent on will alone, but on their respective mental, spiritual, and moral conditions. Neither love nor friendship—much less convivial comradeship—can withstand the



alienation which must ensue from divergence of character and oppugnancy of circumstance.

More or less notable performers of *Prince Henry* on the British Stage were Nicholas Burt, 1667; ——— Scudamore, 1700; Robert Wilks, 1706; John Leigh, 1721; William Mills, 1738; Lacy Ryan, 1746; Henry Giffard, 1747; John Palmer, 1762; William T. Lewis, 1774; Richard Wroughton, 1791; J——— B——— Williamson, 1792; J. P. Kemble, 1802; R. W. Elliston, 1803; Charles Kemble, 1804; S. Penley, 1825; W. C. Macready, 1826; James W. Wallack, 1826; J. M. Vandenhoff, 1850. Robert Wilks was considered supremely fine as *Prince Henry*. His discrimination between the reckless levity of the gay roisterer and the austere dignity of the responsible sovereign was perfect in art and deeply impressive. In every particular he was the gentleman. W. T. Lewis and John Palmer ranked next to Wilks in this character.

#### CHARACTER, AND ACTORS, OF *HOTSPUR*.

The chief representatives of *Hotspur* on the British Stage were Charles Hart, 1669; John Verbruggen, 1700; Barton Booth, 1716; Thomas Elrington, 1716; Lacy Ryan, 1721; William Milward, 1738; David Garrick, 1746; Spranger Barry, 1747; Charles Hol-

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land, 1762; William Smith, 1774; James Aicken, 1777; Joseph George Holman, 1786; John Philip Kemble, 1791; Robert Bensley, 1792; Robert William Elliston, 1803; Edmund Kean, 1819; Charles Mayne Young, 1824; W. C. Macready, 1826; John M. Vandenhoff, 1850; William Creswick, 1853; Henry Marston, 1864, and Lewis Waller, 1896.

It was written of Hart that "in all comedies and tragedies he was concerned in he performed with that exactness and perception that not one of his successors have equalled him." He was successful in *Hotspur*—and, I think, no good actor who has attempted the part could ever fail in it. Some of the commendation bestowed on players of it is a little comic. We are told, for instance, that John M. Vandenhoff "did all that a classical taste and a fine poetic perception could do for the part,"—which, seeing that the part does not require either of those faculties, *Hotspur* not being either classical or poetical, is not informing commentary.

The character of *Hotspur* is readily comprehensible, but no actor can suitably play the part who does not possess, together with the essential means of his art, the qualifications of a commanding figure, a handsome face, a strong voice, and a distinguished manner. *Hotspur* is the resolute, expeditious man of action. He is intolerant of delay. He wishes to be

not talking but doing. His ruling passion is a burning, insatiable desire for the renown which accrues from martial achievement. His craving for military glory is voracious, and that he considers to be the perfection of Honor. He is frank, manly, brave, ardent in spirit, blunt and direct in speech. His temperament is fiery and impetuous. In his home he is good-natured, momentarily even playful, but not affectionate. His manner toward his wife is kind enough, but at once tolerant and peremptory. In some respects he and *Prince Henry* are alike, yet between them there is this radical difference, among others: the *Prince*, beneath his wildness, is stable and prudent, whereas *Hotspur* is rash and reckless. Both are generous spirits and gallant gentlemen. The *Prince* is far the superior character. As a part actors generally prefer *Hotspur*.

Betterton acted *Hotspur*, before he assumed *Falstaff*, and his personation of the fiery, splenetic soldier is extolled by Cibber, and also by Sir Richard Steele, as one of his capital achievements. George Powell succeeded him in the part, but never equalled him, though accounted excellent. Barton Booth succeeded Powell, and by his princely demeanor and electrifying animation, his astonishing facility of facial expression, and his beautiful vocalism delighted every spectator. Garrick, following Booth, played *Hotspur* for the



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first time December 6, 1746, at Covent Garden, wearing a laced coat and a Ramillies wig; later he repeated his performance, but he found himself unsuited to the part and unwelcome in it to his audience, and he discarded it after the fifth representation. Spranger Barry and William Smith were handsome, impetuous, correct, and pleasing in the character, but not superlative.

J. P. Kemble acted *Hotspur*, January 11, 1802, at Drury Lane, and according to Boaden gave a performance quite equal to his excellent *King Henry the Fifth*. Elliston was brilliant as *Hotspur*. He acted the part at the Haymarket Theatre, London, in 1803. His fine person, overwhelming vitality, brisk, dashing manner and flexible voice were advantageous to him in it, but the performance is not anywhere cited as one of his best achievements,—those being in the line of elegant comedy. His best embodiment was that of *Aranza*, in “The Honeymoon.”

Edmund Kean acted *Hotspur* for the first time in London, March 11, 1819, at Drury Lane, Stephen Kemble being the *Falstaff*. To such an actor as Kean such a part as *Hotspur* was trivial. His electrical passion, his bursts of fiery eloquence,—in some of which he made a thrilling use of his harsh, ringing tones,—his burning vitality, and his impetuous action deeply stirred his hearers. The actor who could play

*Shylock*, *Othello*, *King Richard the Third*, and *Sir Giles Overreach* as Kean played them must have made light work of the inflammable and belligerent *Hotspur*. "That," said Sarah Bernhardt, speaking of one of the slight characters of her repertory, "is a part I can take over my knee!" So Kean with *Hotspur*. He was specially praised for the passion and grace of his performance; the finely varied tones of his speech to the *King*,

"My liege, I did deny no prisoners.

But I remember, when the fight was done," etc.

Mention particularly was made of the "tenderness" of his demeanor, as contrasted with the levity of his language, in *Hotspur's* scene with *Lady Percy*. He was held to be at his best in the scene usually called "The Conspiracy,"—Act III., sc. 1, occurring in the *Archdeacon's House*, at Bangor.

LADY PERCY.

*Hotspur's* wife is just a blithe, kind, handsome, good-natured, warm-hearted young woman. Her character is negative. Her ways are pretty. In stage custom she sits on her husband's knee and teases him to tell her what business it is that engages his attention. "What is it carries you away?" she

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inquires. "Why, my horse," he answers. "But if you go—" she continues, and "So far afoot I shall be weary, love," he replies, interrupting her remark. Her quality specially appears in this the prettiest of her speeches:

"In faith, I'll break thy little finger, Harry,  
An if thou wilt not tell me all things true!"

This minor part was not disdained on the old British Stage by actresses of eminence. Hester Santlowe played it, in 1716; Margaret Woffington in 1747; Mrs. Bullock in 1721; Mrs. Powell in 1791; Miss Frances H—— Kelly,—the lady to whom Charles Lamb offered marriage,—in 1824.

### CHARACTER OF *FALSTAFF*.

*Falstaff*, the crowning glory of humor, is a gentleman by birth and rank, but he is not a gentleman in any other way, and all pleading for him as meritorious of the *King's* gratitude and affection is mere sophistry. To women he is either distasteful or positively offensive,—a bulky, gross blackguard; nor is it every man to whom he commends himself, or to whom he is intelligible. The popular ideal of him is a funny, vulgar, fat old man, who laughs, feeds, and guzzles, and the usual stage pres-



entations of him have been in general conformity with that popular ideal. But that is not the true and tenable ideal of the character. Shakespeare's *Falstaff* is a hardened reprobate, an inveterate sinner, a selfish worldling, an insensate, gross old man, who lives—and thrives!—in our unmitigated and continuous censure; he is a robber, a swindler, a lecher, a coward, a braggart, a foul talker, a self-asserting, blatant, rude animal, and he is of an acquisitive and rather oppressive disposition. We know, at all times, that, rightly, he is to be condemned and shunned. But he possesses such force of character, such power of mind, such humor, experience, worldly wisdom, shrewd sagacity, illimitable animal spirits, keen discernment, trenchant wit, and personal fascination that we like him, almost love him, in open and conscious defiance of instinct, knowledge, judgment, morals, and taste. He has a strong, clear, commanding intellect. He knows the world thoroughly,—that is to say, he understands, in whole and in part, the constitution of society in his time; and he can fathom character with an unerring eye. These qualifications give him a sort of social predominance. He holds his own, under all circumstances,—and all the more certainly and easily that he looks upon himself and others and the whole current of passing affairs through a humorous light. The world, for

*Falstaff*, is altogether for enjoyment and jest; and the shrewd sense with which he makes his way in it, along the pathway of animal comfort and pleasure, is surpassed only by the wit that enlivens his progress. Ready, fertile, trenchant, dangerous, now fine and quaint, now recklessly coarse and brutal, this weapon shields him in all encounters and cuts a way for him out of all difficulties—till, indeed, at the last, royal virtue remembers what is due to rectitude, and breaks his poor old heart with righteous scorn. Wise, clear-sighted, humorously philosophical, delightfully witty, the full exponent and incessant cause of careless physical enjoyment and luxurious indolence, *Falstaff* has also a touch of human tenderness. He inspires a sort of brute affection among his wretched pot-house companions, and for the *Prince of Wales* he certainly feels a passion of good-fellowship which amounts to love. Not to like this clever and jolly old sinner is thoroughly impossible—unless to goodyism, which is a third sex and may be left out of the question. Without ever once ceasing to know that he is a hoary scamp, we nevertheless find ease and amusement in his company, and somehow naturally prefer to look on the amiable side of him. That, in plain, set terms, is the ground plan of this extraordinary personage—truly one of the greatest creations in the works of Shake-

speare. "Banish Fat Jack, and banish all the world!" Among men who are tired of mere commonplace views and that routine conduct which makes up so large a part of human life he would be, in idle hours, a delightful companion, and to them he makes an especial appeal. Upon the stage he has most frequently been presented as he appears in "The Merry Wives of Windsor" and where, although distinct and potential, he is not only ludicrous but contemptible. The true *Falstaff* must be sought in the two parts of "King Henry IV." There his life of jollity runs side by side with the current of great affairs—the maintenance of a throne, the conduct of wars, and the fortunes of princes and nobles,—and the spectacle presented is that of a cheerful, rosy old sinner, a living paradox, a bundle of contradictions, who cares not at all for any of those things, but who means simply to take his ease and to make merry, commenting the while, now whimsically, now jovially, but always with humorous sapience, on all that happens.

In "The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth" (extant in 1588), upon which Shakespeare built,—for the reason that, although meagre and coarse, it was known and popular,—one of the *Prince's* low comrades is called *Sir John Oldcastle*, and that name, according to a tradition preserved by Rowe,



slipped into Shakespeare's "King Henry IV.," when it was first acted. *Prince Henry* addresses *Falstaff* as "My old lad of the castle." *Shallow* speaks of him as having been, when a boy, "page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk"—a post actually filled by Oldcastle, in his boyhood. But *Falstaff* is purely a fanciful character, and entirely the poet's creation. In the Epilogue the *Dancer* is made to say, "For anything I know, Falstaff shall die of a sweat, unless already a' be killed with your hard opinions; for Oldcastle died a martyr and this is not the man." Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, a follower of Wickliffe, was cruelly hanged upon a gallows, with a fire under him, in St. Giles's Fields, December 14, 1417, and so killed, because of his heretical religious views. Persons desirous to determine Shakespeare's religious opinions have inferred from the allusion in the Epilogue that he was a Puritan, but no such conclusion is justified. Oldcastle was certainly a martyr, and it was natural that anybody, writing in the time of Queen Elizabeth, should so describe him. Moreover, the authenticity of the Epilogue, as the writing of Shakespeare, is doubted by good Shakespeare scholars. Every student of *Falstaff* will, of course, read the description of his death, in "King Henry V." *Ancient Pistol* was right in his diagnosis of the sickness that carried

him off. He died of grief and shame, at the *King's* repulse. "His heart is fractured and corroborate." There was no other way. The integrity that must maintain a kingdom can keep no fellowship with unprincipled luxury and reckless mirth.

ACTORS OF *FALSTAFF*.—EARLY BRITISH STAGE.

The First Part of "King Henry IV.," according to the reliable authority of Halliwell-Phillipps, appeared on the stage early in 1597. The play at once became popular and it long continued to be so. Six editions of it, in quarto form, were published within twenty-four years immediately succeeding the first representation of it. The Second Part of the play succeeded the First within a few months, certainly before February, 1598, and was published, in quarto, in 1600. Both Parts were printed in the First Folio,—the First from the fifth quarto edition. The Second Part did not obtain as much popularity as the First, and it never has been as popular, although equally good. Both divisions are animated with action and replete with effective situation, contrasted character, lively incident, and rich humor. Both were favored by Queen Elizabeth, and it is recorded that she was so much pleased with the character of *Falstaff* that she commanded the author to write another play, showing *Falstaff* in love:

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this subject is considered in the chapter of this work devoted to "The Merry Wives of Windsor."

The first performance of "King Henry IV.," Part First, was given at the Globe Theatre (1597), with, apparently, John Lowin as *Falstaff*. It has been ingeniously conjectured that Richard Burbage, who is said to have been tall and thin, acted *Prince Henry*, and that the *Hotspur* was Joseph Taylor. No description of the performance, however, is obtainable, nor can any account be obtained of what befell this play on the stage in the course of the first seventy years after its production. We know that it was acted before the Sovereign and the Court, and we cannot doubt that it was many times performed at the Globe,—which, burnt down in 1613 and immediately rebuilt, lasted till 1644,—and at other theatres. On November 2, 1667, the First Part was represented, at Drury Lane, the chief features of the cast being William Wintersell as *King Henry*, Nicholas Burt as *Prince Henry*, Charles Hart as *Hotspur*, William Cartwright as *Falstaff*, and Robert Shatterel as *Poins*. This fragment of the cast is preserved by Downes, in the "Roscius Anglicanus." Commemoration of those actors, particularly of Hart and Burt, though scanty, is cordial in old chronicles, but it is almost invariably general, and as to their acting in this play it is not specific.



The list of more or less important actors who have impersonated *Falstaff*, in "King Henry IV.," on the British Stage, includes John Lowin, 1597; William Cartwright, 1667; John Lacy, 1667 (?); Thomas Betterton, 1770; George Powell, 1712; John Mills, 1716; Christopher Bullock (First Part only), 1721; Barton Booth (First Part only), about 1727; John Harper (Second Part only), 1731; Charles Hulett, 1732; James Quin, 1738; James Love, 1745; Edward Shuter, 1754; Henry Woodward (Second Part only, and only once), 1757; Richard Yates, 1761; John Henderson, 1777; Thomas Ryder (First Part only), 1786; Robert Palmer (First Part only), 1792; Thomas King, 1792; John Fawcett (who did not please), 1795; John Palmer (First Part only), 1779; Stephen Kemble (First Part only), 1802; Francis Blisset (First Part only), 1803; Charles Mathews, the Elder, 1814; Charles Kemble (First Part only), 1824; Robert William Elliston (First Part only), 1826; Samuel Phelps, 1846, and Herbert Beerbohm-Tree, 1896.

Heminge, and not Lowin, is believed by some antiquarian students of stage history to have been the original performer of *Falstaff*, but no description of either of them in the part has been discovered. The legend as to priority favors Lowin. Little is said of Cartwright by any stage recorder, and nothing, that I know of, about his *Falstaff*. Gerrard Langbaine says

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of Lacy (who died in 1681) that he acted *Falstaff* in Cartwright's time and that he "never failed of universal applause."

THOMAS BETTERTON.

In the season of 1699-1700 the First Part was a second time revived at Drury Lane, with the renowned Betterton as *Falstaff*, John Verbruggen as *Hotspur*, Mrs. Bowman as *Lady Percy* and Elizabeth Leigh as *Mrs. Quickly*. Malone ascertained that Betterton's performance of *Falstaff* (the version used was one that the actor had himself made) was greatly admired, that it attracted uncommonly large audiences, and that the veteran (he was then sixty-four) was so much encouraged by the success that he presently (1701) revived the Second Part of the play, considerably altered by himself, and acted *Falstaff* in that. The particular manner of his acting of it is nowhere described. His temperament was cheerful, his extraordinary faculty of impersonation was versatile, his character was substantial, his mien was impressive, and it is likely that he made his *Falstaff* true to Shakespeare, in making him a compound of exuberant mirth, imperious mind, jovial impudence, humorously forceful audacity and truculent arrogance. He retained the part in his repertory till the end of his days (1710). His alteration of the Second Part of "King Henry IV."



*From a Rare Old Engraving*

*Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

**JAMES QUIN AS FALSTAFF**  
(In "King Henry IV.," First Part)

*"Thou knowest my old ward; here I lay, and thus I bore my point."*  
ACT II., SC. 4, FIRST PART





was not published till 1720, soon after a production of it had been made, at Drury Lane, with Barton Booth as the *King*, Wilks as the *Prince*, and Mills as *Falstaff*.

Plays constructed for presentment on a stage practically destitute of scenery must necessarily be subjected to some changes to fit them for presentment on a stage supplied with illustrative accessories sufficiently ample to obviate the need of using placards or choruses. In the theatres of Shakespeare's time the device employed to indicate a change of scene was a curtain (called a traverse), inscribed with the necessary information,—the name of the locality supposed to be shown. In the theatres of Queen Anne's time scenery, introduced by Davenant, was, comparatively, abundant. Betterton's alteration of the Second Part of "King Henry IV." appears to have been made partly with a view to scenical simplification, partly with a view to enlargement of *Falstaff's* prominence, and partly for the inclusion of scenes, selected from Shakespeare's later play of "King Henry V.," still further expository of English history and celebrative of the martial prowess of England. It is a good example of the needless tinkering by which so many of Shakespeare's plays have been marred, almost from the first. Genest's synopsis of it is informing and useful and, as his invaluable "Account" is a book not readily accessible, that document is appended here:

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“Act I. Betterton omits the whole scene at Warkworth and begins with *Falstaff* and his boy. Then follows the scene at the *Archbishop of York's* and that of the arrest, from Shakespeare's Second Act.

“Act II. Consists of the remainder of the original Second Act, but with the omission of the other scene at Warkworth. *Northumberland* is struck out of the *Dramatis Personæ*.

“Act III. Shakespeare's first scene is omitted; the act begins at *Shallow's* house. Then follows the scene in which the *Archbishop of York* and his party are made prisoners.

“Act IV. Begins with the *King's* soliloquy from the original Third Act. Then comes the grand scene. In the *King's* fine address to his son Betterton has injudiciously omitted two lines:

‘Let all the tears that should bedew my hearse  
Be drops of balm to sanctify thy head.’

“After that we have the scene in which *Silence* sings, and the act concludes with the interview between *Henry the Fifth* and the *Chief Justice*.

“Act V. Two comic scenes of the original Fifth Act (the first and the fourth) are very improperly omitted. The act begins with the *King's* [*Henry Fifth's*] procession to Westminster Abbey. *Falstaff* is rebuked by him, but not sent to prison by the *Chief Justice*. The play concludes with the First Act of ‘King Henry V.,’ abridged, and with the scene at Southampton from the same play. This explains how the *Archbishop of Canterbury* becomes one of the *Dramatis Personæ*, which must appear very strange to any person who sees the bill without having read the play.

“Betterton was unjustifiable in patching up his play from ‘King Henry V.’ and his alteration on the whole is a bad one,



but he has not taken any flagrant liberties with Shakespeare's text, except in one instance, when *Falstaff* is said to have been Page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of *Suffolk*, instead of Duke of *Norfolk*; an alteration which must have proceeded from great ignorance or from shameful carelessness." [This "alteration" probably proceeded from a compositor's blunder that was not "caught" in the proofs.—W. W.]

Old John Bowman (1651-1739) acted the *Chief Justice* in Betterton's production of the Second Part of the History, and he is mentioned as duly serious, easy, discreet, and impressive in that inconspicuous yet important character, upon which the effect of *Falstaff's* humor and then of his bewildered and rueful consternation considerably depends.

GEORGE POWELL TO JAMES QUIN.

Powell played *Falstaff* in direct imitation of Betterton, and he even copied the veteran's actions when surprised, while acting, with acute pangs of gout, to which he was subject. Harper, fat and jolly, was pronounced "very agreeable" as *Falstaff*. "Harper's fat figure, full voice, round face, and honest laugh rather than his intelligence fixed him at last in the jolly *Knight's* easy chair!" (Davies). Charles Hulett (1701-1736), a corpulent person, possessed of a strong, clear, melodious voice, a fine singer, coarsely comical and in his joviality addicted to practical joking, is mentioned

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as an actor of great ability and as well suited to *Falstaff*, which part he acted, October 2, 1732, at Goodman's Fields Theatre and in which he was much esteemed. Barton Booth appeared as *Sir John* once, and only once, for his benefit. Woodward and also Yates gave one performance each, and only one, of the *Fat Knight*: both were diffident in the part and they failed to please: the consideration that could have induced Woodward to venture in it cannot be surmised. Mills was respectably competent. Bullock, manager and dramatist as well as actor, is mentioned as "a good performer." Quin was superb in some parts of *Falstaff*. His first essay was made in "The Merry Wives of Windsor": later he acted the *Knight* in both Parts of "King Henry IV." He was exceptionally fitted for the part. "In person," says Davies, "he was tall and bulky; his voice strong and pleasing; his countenance manly, and his eye piercing and expressive. In scenes where satire and sarcasm were poignant he greatly excelled,—particularly in the witty triumph over *Bardolph's* carbuncles and the fooleries of the *Hostess*. In the whole part he was animated, but not equally happy. His supercilious brow, in spite of assumed gayety, sometimes unmasked the surliness of his disposition." Doctors differ. Samuel Foote said: "I can only recommend a man who wants to see a character properly played to see Quin in *Falstaff*."

Quin, as *Falstaff*, found great difficulty in lifting upon his shoulders the dead *Hotspur*, when Barry was the corpse; and Henderson found it well-nigh impossible for him to shoulder the defunct *Hotspur* of William Smith. In Henderson's time, accordingly, that piece of stage business, long customary,—indeed, it is prescribed in the First Folio: "Takes Hotspurre on his backe,"—was, finally, omitted. The later custom is for *Prince Henry* and others to come upon this scene and discover *Falstaff* trying to raise the body of *Hotspur*, from which effort he abruptly desists, rising with the bombastic exclamation, "There's Percy for you!"

## EDWARD BERRY TO JOHN HENDERSON.

Edward Berry (died, 1760), who was a singing comedian, is named as "respectable in several parts but drowsy in others," and his *Falstaff* is characterized as that of a beer-house. He resembled the worthy and heavy John Mills, and probably he was one of the class of actors called "useful." Love, whose true name was Dance, acted *Falstaff* sufficiently well to win the commendation of even the caustic Churchill, who warned him, however, against being *Falstaff* in every other part that he played. He acted many parts, but was at his best in *Falstaff*. Shuter was "irresistibly



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comic" as *Falstaff*. "Superior whim and humor," says Tate Wilkinson, "never inhabited a human breast." "What he wanted in judgment," says Davies, "he supplied in archness and drollery. He enjoyed the effect of his roguery with a chuckle of his own compounding, and rolled his full eye, when detected, with a most laughable effect."

Henderson's *Falstaff* was esteemed matchless. Davies, who frequently saw him act, and who remembered Quin's performance, says: "In the impudent dignity of the character Quin greatly exceeded all competitors. In the frolicsome, gay, and humorous situation of *Falstaff* Henderson is superior to every man." Henderson appears to have entered with the utmost abandonment into the exuberant gayety of *Falstaff*, his enjoyment of life, his reckless levity, his relish of pleasure, his joyous perception of the comic aspect of everything. One of his finer moments was that of his delivery of the description of the ragamuffin regiment. Genest expresses the opinion that Henderson made *Falstaff* "neither very vulgar nor very polite." An old bit of verse says that

"When Henderson resigned his breath  
*Jack Falstaff* also died."

"Henderson's performance of *Falstaff*," so wrote Boaden, "is as much above all competition as the

character itself transcends all that was ever thought comic in man. The cause of this pre-eminence was purely *mental*; he *understood* it better in its diversity of powers; his imagination was congenial; the images seemed coined in the brain of the actor; they sparkled in his eye before the tongue supplied them with language. I saw him act the character in the Second Part of 'King Henry IV.,' where it is more metaphysical and consequently less powerful. He could not supply the want of active dilemmas, such as exhilarate the *Falstaff* of the First Part, but it was equally perfect in conception and execution."

GEORGE FREDERICK COOKE.

Cooke acted *Falstaff* for the first time in London on February 24, 1802. He was in the habit of keeping a desultory "Journal," and, relative to that occurrence and the character, he wrote: "This season [1801-'02] I took the First Part of 'King Henry IV.,' and for the first time in London acted *Falstaff*. I have several times repeated it, with the *Falstaffs* of the Second Part and 'The Merry Wives of Windsor,' but never could please myself, or come up to my own ideas, in any of them." He was more fortunate in pleasing others, since in all his representations of *Falstaff* he was "highly and deservedly applauded." On January

9, 1804, he was to have acted the character at Covent Garden, in the Second Part of "King Henry IV.," with John Kemble as *King Henry*, Charles Kemble as the *Prince*, and Munden as *Shallow*; but, having got into a drunken brawl with a Mr. Johnson, who knocked him down, injuring his face and one of his eyes (he wished thereafter to fight a duel with the bellicose and muscular Johnson, but was denied), he was incapacitated and could not appear. The performance was therefore postponed until January 17, when it occurred as planned, Cooke acting *Falstaff* so splendidly that even the uneasy moralist Dunlap (always in distress over the pints swallowed by the rash player) was moved to remark that he performed the part "with a brilliancy as an actor which would almost make us forget the clouds which had just obscured the man." Though Cooke's *Falstaff* is nowhere described with the careful analysis and specification which it deserved, there can be no doubt, considering the comments on it, fragmentary but usually commendatory, that have been preserved, and also what is known of his acting in general, that it was supremely good. He had seen Henderson, and he told Dunlap, with characteristic candor, that "his best points in *Falstaff* were only copied from that great actor"; but, as Dunlap is fair enough to admit, Cooke "was no servile copyist"; he merely did what every other artist does, consciously or otherwise,



—that is, he profited by example. “Originality,” said Voltaire, “is nothing but judicious imitation.” Cooke went to Nature for his inspiration. He was a stalwart person, of imposing appearance. His face was large. His features, though harsh, were exceedingly mobile and expressive. His method was bold, large, and free. He possessed wide range of vocal expression,—from high, rough, grating tones to those that are softest and most insinuating. He had, also, abundant humor. He was at his best in tragedy,—though Leigh Hunt argues to the contrary, ranking him highest in comedy.

## STEPHEN KEMBLE.—ROBERT PALMER.

Stephen Kemble (1758-1822) played *Falstaff*, in September, 1802, at Drury Lane, with much popular applause. He was a studious, capable actor. His physical bulk was so great that he made up for the part without padding. He wrote a prologue for the occasion of his London appearance,—which was spoken by John Bannister, then stage manager,—in which he caused it to be said of himself:

“A *Falstaff* here to-night by Nature made  
Lends to your favorite Bard his pon’drous aid.  
No man in Buckram he! no stuffing gear!  
No feather bed, nor e’en a pillow-bier,

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But all good honest flesh and blood and bone,  
 And weighing, more or less, some thirty stone.  
 Upon the northern coast by chance we caught him  
 And hither in a four-wheel'd wagon brought him  
 For in a chaise the varlet ne'er could enter,  
 And no mail-coach on such a fare would venture.  
 Blest with unwieldiness, at least his size  
 Will favor find in ev'ry critic's eyes;  
 And should his humor and his mimic art  
 Combine to fit the actor to the part,  
 As once 'twas said of Macklin, in the *Jew*,—  
 This is the very *Falstaff* Shakespeare drew!"

A "pillow-bier" was once the name for what is now called a pillow case. A "stone" is fourteen pounds, and if Stephen Kemble weighed "thirty stone, more or less," he weighed about 420 pounds. The allusion to the "northern coast" is a reference to Edinburgh, where Stephen Kemble had resided, as manager, in association with John Jackson, of the Theatre Royal there. This actor was one of the younger brothers of John Kemble, "the great Kemble," and he was familiarly designated "the big Kemble," in contradistinction to his abler and more renowned relative. His *Falstaff* was deemed specially good in the scene at the Boar's Head Tavern, after the robbery on Gad's Hill, and "good also at Shrewsbury"; but in order to insure for the part and for the play the obtainment of their full effect *Falstaff* must be impersonated continuously,

not intermittently. Kemble's voice is described as having been "loud and overpowering" but at times "deficient in modulation."

Robert Palmer (1756-1773), who assumed the part January 11, 1802, at Drury Lane, knew the business of it and he gave a performance merely tolerable in form, possessed of "roar and bustle," but deficient in humor and in the essential elements of intellectual capacity and predominant force of character.

Instructive comment on some of the old English actors of *Falstaff* is provided in a letter from John Taylor, editor of "The London Sun" in the time of Kemble, addressed to Charles Mathews, the Elder, July 13, 1814, when that comedian was about to appear in that difficult part:

"I have seen many *Falstaffs*, but none that thoroughly satisfied me. Henderson's was the most entertaining, but his tones were, in general, more like an old woman than an old man, and he laughed too much; though indeed that practice may successfully draw the laugh of the audience. Ryder played it like a ferocious bully. King was quaint, formal, and crabbed. John Palmer, though an excellent actor, could not rise to a due conception of *Falstaff's* humor: he was heavy in it, throughout. Lee Lewes was in this part too contemptible for criticism [this actor played it only in "The Merry Wives of Windsor"]. Cooke performed it like an old lurching sharper: he was shrewd and sarcastic, but wanted easy flowing humor. My idea of *Falstaff* is that he was originally



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a gentleman, a man of education, as we see by his allusion to logic, and the high order of his allusions generally, but he was debased by vice and luxury, yet not to such a degree as to place him on a level with his followers."

### CHARLES MATHEWS, THE ELDER.

Charles Mathews, the Elder (1776-1834), acted *Falstaff* for the first time, July 15, 1814, at the London Haymarket Theatre, and his performance appears to have been uncommonly good. One contemporary critic says: "Mathews enveloped his tall person with so much ease as to present a perfect image of the *Fat Knight*, . . . and in his manner of delivering the jibes and jokes of the character he showed an admirable acuteness. . . . What was wanting to make it a perfect representation was the round volume of voice commensurate with the hollow of the frame from which it came." Another commentator remarks that "Nothing could exceed the felicity with which Mathews contrived to blend the occasional querulousness of age and infirmity with the settled habits of riotous intemperance. . . . When his casual fit of repentance is dissipated by the suggestion of the robbery, the rapturous facility of his transition from praying to purse-taking was irresistibly ludicrous." A few days after his first appearance as *Falstaff* Mathews met with an accident, while driving, and was so severely injured that for



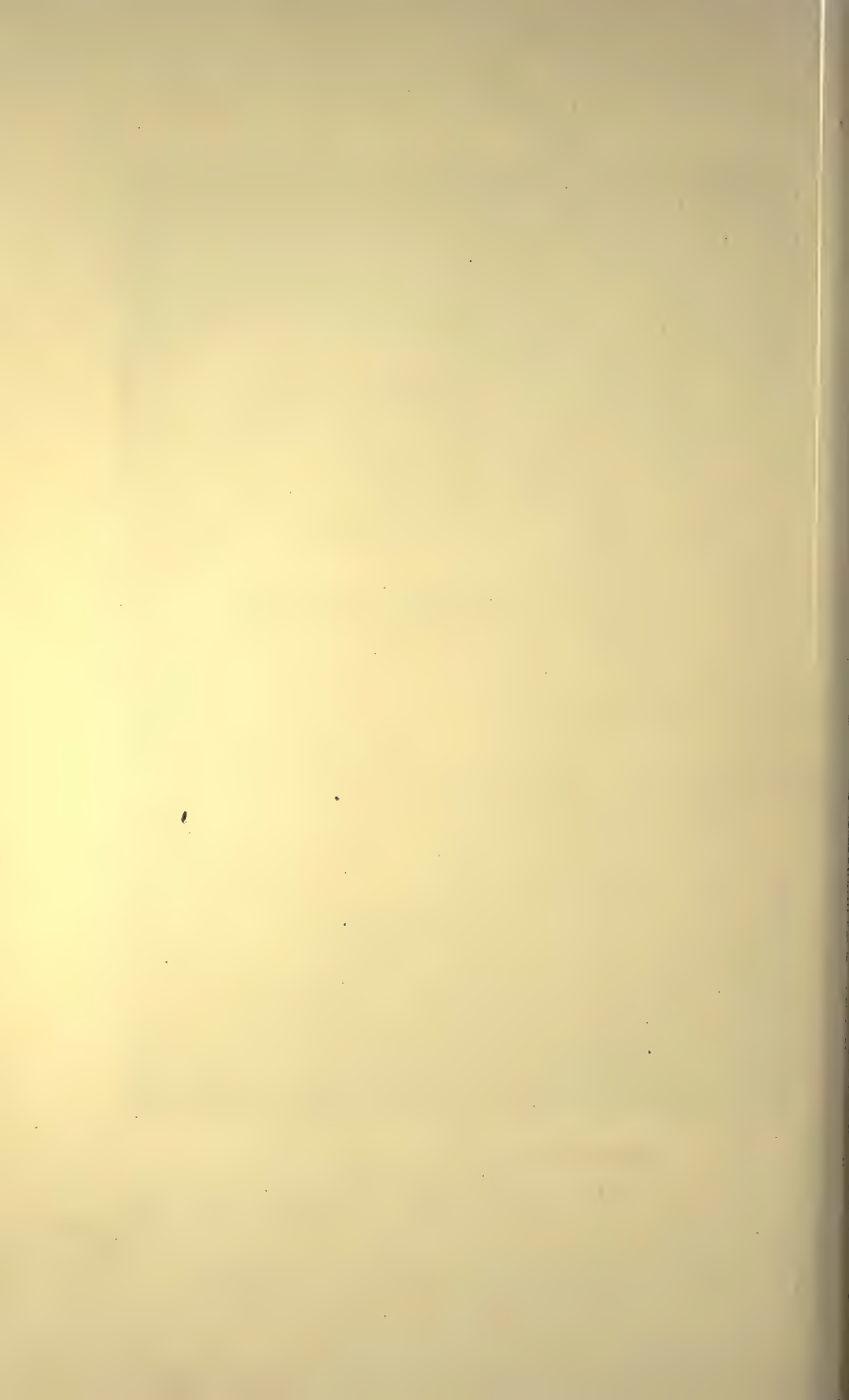
*From an Old Print*

*Collection of David Eelasco, Esq.*

**STEPHEN KEMBLE AS FALSTAFF**

*"All's one for that.—A plague of all cowards, still say I."*

**ACT II., SC. 4, FIRST PART**





some time he could not act. On March 28, 1815, his performance of *Falstaff* was repeated, at Covent Garden, and his biographer says that "he came off victorious." He did not, however, retain the part in his repertory.

## VARIOUS PERFORMERS.

Charles Kemble,—incomparable as *Falconbridge* and as *Mercutio*,—gave a bad performance of *Falstaff*. His voice was weak, and his temperament and method in art were antagonistic to *Falstaff*. He endeavored to suffuse (or, perhaps, involuntarily did suffuse) the character with a refinement which it does not possess, which is inappropriate, and which cannot properly be imparted to it. Doran, who greatly admired Charles Kemble in several parts, dismissed him abruptly in this: "His *Falstaff*," he says, "I would willingly forget. It was a mistake."—Mention should be made that Charles Kemble's brother, the renowned John Philip Kemble, whose comedy suggested to one observer "a hearse stalled in a snow-storm," entertained the design of playing *Falstaff*, paltered with it for some time, was announced to appear in it shortly before his retirement, but wisely discarded the plan of undertaking a task for which he was completely unfitted.

William Dowton (1776-1846) seems to have been a

crabbed, crusty, crotchety actor, better fitted to play *Sir Sampson Legend* and *Sir Anthony Absolute* than to play *Falstaff*. He acted that part, however, and was admired in it. Planché declared him to be "the best *Falstaff* ever seen," but omitted to state his reasons for that verdict. Leigh Hunt ranked him as a great actor in comedy,—an actor who "caught the feelings rather than the habits of men,"—and that acute critic particularly commended the facility with which he could express "the testiness of age and the passionate feeling of impatient honesty." His *Malvolio* and his *Old Dornton* were specially liked by the public. His *Falstaff*, Planché's view excepted, appears to have been entirely creditable but not extraordinary. Ireland included it as among "the very best" that he had ever seen.

Robert William Elliston (1774-1831) appeared twice as *Falstaff*, in the First Part of "King Henry IV.," May 11 and 15, 1826, at Drury Lane. He was then in his fifty-second year and his health, undermined by intemperance, was breaking. He had rehearsed the part exceedingly well, but while unctuously humorous, he gave a feeble performance. On the occasion of his second attempt he became so completely exhausted that, in the Fifth Act, he fell on the stage and was unable to rise. He did not attempt the part again.

Mark Lemon (1809-1870), journalist, dramatist,

novelist, and song-writer, one of the founders of "Punch" (1841), was an amateur actor of exceptional ability and he appeared, successfully, in the character of *Falstaff*,—to which, physically, he was suited and with the jocular humor of which he was actively sympathetic.

## SAMUEL PHELPS.

Phelps began his first season as sole manager of Sadler's Wells Theatre, July 25, 1864, with a revival of "King Henry IV.," First Part, in which George Bennett played *King Henry*, William Creswick *Hotspur*, and Henry Marston *Prince Henry*, while Phelps, for the first time, personated *Falstaff*. His embodiment was esteemed by judicious contemporary critics as one of the best that he ever gave. He was specially commended for showing "a full intellectual appreciation of the part" and for the vigor of an "imagination which seizes at once and fully on the author's idea and develops it with a suggestive power that is kindling and contagious." F. G. Tomlins praised his production because of the "grace and propriety manifested in the whole business of the scene" and because the play was "brought forward as a whole" and was more "fully developed" than it had been at Drury Lane, even when Edmund Kean acted



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in it, as *Hotspur*. Phelps's biographers record that in the course of his theatrical career (which began in his boyhood, 1820, and ended on March 1, 1877) he played *Falstaff* between three and four hundred times,—acting in both “King Henry IV.,” First Part, and “The Merry Wives of Windsor”: he did not play *Sir John* in the Second Part of the History. His nephew, William May Phelps, wrote:

“I have seen every other *Falstaff* of my time, including Bartley, Strickland, and the American actor Hackett, but none of them, in my opinion, approached him, I am almost tempted to say, within miles, either in the breadth of outline or filling up of this wonderful creation.”

That Phelps gave, in general, a thoroughly good personation of *Falstaff* cannot reasonably be doubted. The nature of its “breadth and outline” and the felicity of interpretative action, facial expression, gesture, intonation, etc., with which it was “filled up,” not being specified, can be only surmised. Prof. Henry Morley wrote of him:

“He lays stress not on Falstaff's sensuality but on the lively intellect that stands for soul as well as mind in his gross body, displays his eagerness to parry and thrust, his determination to cap every other man's good saying with something of his own, which makes him, according to the manner of the actor, thrust in with inarticulate sounds as

if to keep himself a place open for speech, while he is fetching up his own flagon of wit from the farthest caverns of his stomach."

This statement indicates a false view of the character and specifies, with implied approval, a bad method in acting. *Falstaff* has no conscious, deliberate purpose "to cap every other man's good saying"; his intellect is fecund and vigorous; he is both witty and humorous not because he intends to be, or makes or needs to make any effort to be, but because he cannot help being so. The "thrusting in with inarticulate sounds" is a bad device to keep the attention of spectators focussed on the actor using it (as also is every restless movement, gesture, or grimace), and it is surprising to find such a trick attributed to so good an artist as Phelps unquestionably was. It is a trick most disconcerting to other actors on the scene and it is tersely designated—and rightly condemned—by such as "hogging."

On March 17, 1853, also at Sadler's Wells, Phelps produced the Second Part of "King Henry IV.," the occasion being that of his benefit, and in that play he acted both *King Henry* and *Justice Shallow*,—with George Barrett as *Falstaff*. His embodiment of the *King* was designated "regal and paternal" and was said to have been "as broadly and grandly defined and personated as was the fatuous and senile *Justice*,"

and particular emphasis was placed on the versatility of an actor who could, in the same hour, exhibit, with equal truth, exactness, and effect, the breadth and depth of paternal affection, the height of royal dignity, "the setting in death of an energetic mind of the largest scope" and likewise "the expiring fatuity of a vain, feeble, and petty intellect and character." Phelps, on the same occasion, displayed his various talent by a vivacious performance of *Jeremy Diddler*, in Kenney's capital farce of "Raising the Wind."

In the Second Part of "King Henry IV." the *King* appears only thrice,—first in Act III., sc. 1,—where he speaks the eloquent and affecting soliloquy on Sleep, ending with "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown,"—then in Act IV., scs. 4 and 5, the latter containing the pathetic interview between the death-struck monarch and *Prince Henry*, and ending with his exit, to die, in the "Jerusalem Chamber." Phelps adroitly combined the two scenes into one, the latter a little condensed. Oxenford, while commending him as the *King*, considered him perfection as *Shallow*: "to behold the complete display of Phelps's peculiar genius," he wrote, "—that of characteristic impersonation,—we should rather turn to the other part, that of *Justice Shallow*, as a masterpiece of comic creation. . . . The loquacity and the effect of age on a not over-wise head are exhibited with singular



accuracy." The garrulity, the manner of twice repeating words the better to grasp their meaning, and the denotement of that "want of sensibility which belongs to doting age" are then mentioned, and the achievement is ranked with *Bottom* as one of Phelps's "great comic performances."

AMERICAN STAGE.—ACTORS OF *FALSTAFF*.

The first performance on the American Stage of "King Henry IV." (First Part) occurred December 18, 1761, at the Chappel Street Theatre, situated in what is now called Beekman Street,—David Douglass appearing as *Falstaff*, Lewis Hallam as *Hotspur*, and ——— Quelch as *King Henry the Fourth*: those are the only features of the cast which have been ascertained, and nothing is known as to the setting and dressing of the play,—which, probably, followed the custom then prevalent in the English Theatre and were tolerably adequate. Douglass and Hallam were proficient actors. Little is known of Quelch. He was a singer, and he is mentioned as having played *Roderigo*, in "Othello," a part far removed from that of *King Henry*. In the early days of our Stage "King Henry IV." was popular. After the presentation in 1761 and before 1800 seventeen productions of it were accomplished, and it was often repeated, in

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various American cities. In the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century many presentments of it were made, consequent on the exceptional success as *Falstaff* gained by James Henry Hackett (1800-1871), who gave a masterly performance of the part, and who, for many years and under all circumstances, was ever ready and eager to play it. Edwin Booth, writing to me (1880), facetiously said: "You know the old gentleman [Hackett] always carried his *Falstaff* belly with him, on all his hunting and fishing tours—by mere chance, of course!" There is no record, as far as I know, of the number of times that Hackett acted *Falstaff*, in the History or the Comedy, but in the former alone it must have been more than 1,000. Aside from those given by Douglass and by Hackett there is record of performances of *Falstaff* by —— Verling, who played the part at Annapolis, 1769; —— Ryan, 1782; John Harper, 1792; —— Hipworth, 1795; John Hodgkinson,—whose performance is said by Dunlap, who saw it, to have been "overcharged and hard,"—1802; William Warren, the Elder, 1804; John E. Harwood, 1806; George Frederick Cooke, 1810; George Bartley, 1818; John Kent, 1822; Thomas Abthorpe Cooper, 1826; Thomas Kilner, 1831; Thomas Sowerby Hamblin, 1831; William Dowton, 1836; Edmon Sheppard Conner, 18—; Henry John Wallack, 1858; John Jack, 1869; and

William F. Owen, 1896. Performers of the character in the Second Part are named in the section of this chapter devoted to that subject.

Among the early representatives of *Falstaff* on the American Stage Warren was the most renowned. The impersonative faculty of Warren was equalled only by his versatility. He was considered a great *Falstaff*, and his *King Henry the Fourth*,—which part he acted when *Falstaff* was assumed by Cooke,—was esteemed a judicious and noble performance. “His value as a comedian, highly as it was appreciated by the public, was never too highly estimated.” He possessed sterling pathetic powers; some of his performances were “ranked as high efforts in pure tragedy” (W. B. Wood). Warren habitually acted *Falstaff* in the First Part of “King Henry IV.” and in “The Merry Wives of Windsor.” “The characters he sustained with the highest reputation were *Falstaff*, *Sir Peter Teazle*, *Old Norval*, *Brabantio*, *Sir Anthony Absolute*, and the like, in tragedy and comedy.” John E. Harwood (1770-1809), designated, in 1832, by Dunlap, who saw him act and knew him well, “as one of the best comedians the American Stage has possessed,” was considered an excellent representative of *Falstaff*, notwithstanding that the part “had not been sufficiently studied.” Ireland ascertained that his was esteemed by some observers the best *Falstaff* seen in



America prior to that of George Frederick Cooke, who acted the part for the first time in this country, December 14, 1810, at the Park Theatre. In the opinion of Ireland "Harwood was perfection as *Falstaff*." This actor was the first in America to play *Charles Surface*: his range in comedy must have been wide indeed if he was able to act both those parts as they should be acted!

An ambitious, creditable performance of "King Henry IV.," First Part, was made at the Park Theatre, June 4, 1802,—Lewis Hallam acting *King Henry*, John Martin the *Prince*, Thomas A. Cooper *Hotspur*, and John Hodgkinson *Falstaff*. Hodgkinson's *Falstaff*, according to the scattering annals of that theatrical period, was merely tolerable. He played parts as sharply contrasted as *Hamlet* and *Falconbridge*, *Macbeth* and *Benedick*, and generally he was admired in all that he did; but his attempt at *Falstaff* failed. Dunlap says of Hodgkinson that "his low comedy was his true excellence." But *Falstaff* is not a low comedy part.

Cooper, who was an actor of the Kemble school,—his great parts being *Macbeth*, *Antony*, *Virginius*, and *Damon*,—sometimes played *Falstaff*, for which character he was peculiarly unfitted. Once, about 1831, when acting it in Philadelphia, and suffering from the oppression of heat, he insisted on having the

great doors opened at the back of the stage, so that he might sit in the draft and cool himself; and being almost exhausted by his efforts and exasperated at inability to keep powder on his nose, he was heard to exclaim, with great vigor: "I'll pray to be *damned* if ever I undertake to act this infernal old vagabond again!" N. M. Ludlow, in his reminiscent volume about "Dramatic Life," gives this glimpse of Cooper, who, in the season of 1830-'31, chanced to appear at the Louisville Theatre, of which Ludlow was then manager:

"During this engagement Cooper acted the character of *Falstaff*, in Shakespeare's 'King Henry IV.,' Part First. He had performed it only three times before, and said he felt very uneasy in it; and I thought he must have felt so, for it was far from being equal to his other representations—certainly one he was quite unfit for—and I believe he never attempted the character again, for I never heard of his playing it after that time."

George Bartley (1782-1858) gained high repute as *Falstaff*, particularly when he came to America, accompanied by his wife (originally famous on the British Stage as Miss Smith). In London he was long a favorite at Drury Lane and the Haymarket. He first appeared in New York, November 19, 1818, at the Park Theatre, as *Falstaff*. He was a humorist of the rich and rosy order; in height about five

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feet three inches; in person very stout, so that he needed but little padding for the *Fat Knight*; having light brown hair and blue eyes, a fair complexion and a clear, agreeable voice. He was a fine speaker and prone to much laughter, and he possessed in abundance the rare and delightful faculty of impersonation.

John Reeve (1799-1838) visited America, appearing, December 14, 1835, at the Park Theatre, New York. He had been on the London Stage for about seventeen years. He was the original of *Jerry*, in Pierce Egan's sporting play of "Tom and Jerry," presented at the Adelphi Theatre in 1821, and also of *Abraham Delawhang*, in that writer's "Life of an Actor" (founded on his book of the same name), 1824. At the Park he assumed *Falstaff*, May 3, 1836, and was merely ludicrous. He is described as having been more a buffoon than an actor.

JAMES HENRY HACKETT.

"*Chief Justice*. What's he that goes there?

*Attendant*. Falstaff, an't please your lordship."

—KING HENRY IV., PART II.

James Henry Hackett (1800-1871) gave the best performance of *Falstaff* that has been seen on the American Stage in my time, and I doubt whether it was ever surpassed or often, if ever, equalled, on





*From a Photograph*

*In the Collection of the Author*

**JAMES HENRY HACKETT AS SIR JOHN FALSTAFF**  
(In "King Henry IV.")

*"I'll not march through Coventry with them, that's flat! . . . There's but a shirt and a half in all my company; and the half shirt is two napkins tacked together and thrown over the shoulders . . ."*

ACT IV., SC. 2, FIRST PART



any Stage at any time. Hackett first acted the part at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, May 31, 1832, in association with Charles Kean as *Hotspur*. He and Kean were then playing "star" engagements at that house, appearing on alternate nights. In the course of a stroll which those actors were taking together in the city Kean inquired whether Hackett had "ever thought of acting *Falstaff*?" On being informed that the American actor "had particularly studied the character" with that object in view, Kean said to him: "I have a strong desire to play *Hotspur*, and if you will undertake to be ready within a week to make a first appearance in *Falstaff*, I will essay *Hotspur* on the occasion, for the first time also." That plan was fulfilled and the performance was successful. I have not found that Hackett repeated his *Falstaff* before 1833, when he acted it in London, at the Haymarket. From that time to the end of his professional career, which befell May 21, 1870, at De Bar's Opera House, St. Louis, he made it the chief feature of his repertory, and he acted it so often that in the public mind he became completely identified with it: he was often spoken of as "*Falstaff* Hackett." He went to Shakespeare's text for his ideal, which was correct and definite, and he went to Nature for the expression of it. He was not misled by any fastidious notion of latent refinement in the character. He



rejected the silly assumption, set forth by more than one commentator, that *Falstaff* is "a gentleman," and also he rejected the ignorant, idle, only too common opinion that *Falstaff* is merely a "funny old fat man." "There was no phase of the character," so he wrote, "either as exhibited in his own words, or as relatively indicated by their context, which had escaped my very careful consideration before I resorted to histrionic art to embody and represent it to an audience."

It was my privilege to possess personal acquaintance with Hackett and frequently to see him act, not only *Falstaff* but also *Sir Pertinax MacSycophant*, *Monsieur Tonson*, *O'Callaghan*, *Rip Van Winkle*, etc. He was a great actor—a comedian of the first order. His *Falstaff* was a symmetrical, felicitous blending of intellect and sensuality. The external attributes were perfect. The burly form, the round, ruddy face, the rimy fringe of gray whiskers, the bright, penetrating, merry eyes, the rows of even, white teeth, the strong, hard voice—now deep, now momentarily breaking, through assumed shortness of breath,—the pompous, gross, selfish, animal demeanor, tempered at times by wily sagacity and the perfect manner of a cynical old man of the world, combined to make it an admirably clear and natural embodiment in all that relates to form. There were differences of critical

opinion as to the spirit of the personation,—as invariably occurs with reference to art of decided character and conspicuous merit: it is, as a rule, only concerning things of no importance that everybody is agreed, and opinion is largely controlled by temperament: few persons can exercise fair judgment about things which are, temperamentally, antagonistic to their taste. The humor of Hackett's *Falstaff* was not so much unctuous as it was satirical, and, rightly, it was much varied, to suit the varied modes and situations of the character. The essential quality of his ideal was specially appreciable in his delivery of the soliloquy on "Honor," in Act IV., sc. 2, of "King Henry IV.," and in *Falstaff's* scene, at first alone, then with *Bardolph*, and then with *Ford* disguised as *Master Brook*, after the ducking in the Thames, in "The Merry Wives of Windsor." The first,—in its sly shrewdness, its contempt for self-sacrifice, and its insensibility to nobleness of motive or conduct,—was almost sardonic. The shudder with which Hackett spoke the words about Honor, "Who hath it? he that—*died*—o' Wednesday," with its obvious revulsion from even the thought of death, was wonderfully expressive of *Falstaff's* animal relish of life, and also it was supremely comic. In the latter scene his denotement of the discomfiture of a balked and fretted sensualist and the rage and self-scorn of a

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sensible man at having been physically humiliated, was surpassingly ludicrous, partly because of its profound seriousness, and partly because of the *Knight's* movements of impatience and disgust and the many rapidly changing waves of comic expression which flowed over his face.

This comedian manifested in *Falstaff* a mind that was spontaneously merry, but one in which merriment was tintured with scorn. A special excellence in the disclosure was the celerity with which the working of the mind was revealed—the rising in it of ideas, images, and fitting phrases which, whatever else they may be, are exceedingly *comic*. There is a sturdy individuality latent within the humor and boisterous conviviality of *Falstaff*, and that was the basis of Hackett's impersonation. As an artist in acting he knew precisely what he wished to do and precisely why and how to do it, and he did it with exemplary exactitude and strong effect. He could, and sometimes he did, use delicate detail and a light touch, but his style was, in general, free, bold, and vigorous. He painted with a large brush and in vivid colors. His countenance expressed his mind before he uttered a word, and the sympathy of the spectator went continually with him. His facial aspect, when *Falstaff* entered the room in the Boar's Head Inn and, looking askance at the *Prince* and



*Poins*, uttered the speech beginning "A plague of all cowards, say I," was in the highest degree expressive of the fundamental excellence of acting,—*impersonation*. *Falstaff* has a powerful mind, which has been corrupted by sensuality and self-indulgence and is basely employed on trivial things. The sensuality, the ignominious grossness, of the character has been shown in various ancient performances of which I have read and in various modern ones,—those, for instance, of John Jack, William F. Owen, and Herbert Beerbohm-Tree,—which I have seen: the intrinsic *mind* of *Falstaff* was shown by Hackett. He fully comprehended the character, he made it fully manifest; he exhibited with bounteous humor and glittering keenness of satire *Falstaff's* boundless resources of mirth and wit, his prodigious vitality, his acute knowledge of human nature and of the world.

Hackett's first London appearance as *Falstaff* was made at the Haymarket, May 13, 1833. When he acted it at Drury Lane, November 1, 1839, Henry Marston acted *Prince Henry*, Edward William Elton *Hotspur*, and Thomas Archer *King Henry*. The play was deemed to be "badly cast." Hackett's personation was much and foolishly censured in the press: with the public he won his way. One writer accused him of trying "to give us as close a copy, in

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manner, action, and voice, as he could, of Bartley." Hackett wrote, on a clipping of that notice which is preserved among his papers (for access to which I am indebted to his son, James Keteltas Hackett): "I never saw Bartley's *Falstaff* but once in my life and then I was a boy, and when I took up the character as a study, *twelve years later*, I could not remember a single point of his, except his general and pleasing appearance." Hackett customarily acted "King Henry IV." in a five act version, the text suitably cut and altered and with some transposition of scenes. He sometimes presented it in a three act arrangement, made as follows:

Arrangement		Of original.
Act I., sc. 1,	is	Act I., sc. 3.
" I., sc. 2,	"	" I., sc. 2.
" I., sc. 3,	"	" II., sc. 2.
" I., sc. 4,	"	" II., sc. 4.
" II., sc. 1,	"	" III., sc. 2.
" II., sc. 2,	"	" IV., sc. 2.
" III., sc. 2,	"	" V., All scenes.

The text was cut and a little altered, where necessary.

WILLIAM RUFUS BLAKE.—JOHN HENRY JACK.

William Rufus Blake (1805-1863), so prominently associated with Wallack's Theatre in its great days

and so pleasingly remembered as one of the foremost comedians of his time, though he gained no special repute as *Falstaff*, gave a respectable performance of the part, appearing at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, in 1843, in "King Henry IV.," First Part. His associates were Henry Henkins (1809-1853) as the *King*, James W. Wallack, the Younger, as *Hotspur*, William Wheatley as the *Prince*, Mrs. Wallack as *Lady Percy*, and Mrs. G. H. Jones as the *Hostess*. That was an uncommonly good cast. A little later in 1843 Blake repeated his performance at the Park Theatre, New York, alternating with Hackett, who fulfilled two engagements at that house in that year, and who,—*Falstaff* being a heavy part,—liked to be relieved from acting it night after night. Associated performers at the Park were Thomas Barry as the *King*, Charles W. Hield as *Prince Henry*, John Dyott as *Hotspur*, Mrs. Abott as *Lady Percy*, and Mrs. Vernon as the *Hostess*. Blake might have given a completely satisfactory performance of *Falstaff* in the Comedy, but for the entirely satisfactory performance of *Falstaff* in the History he did not possess either the intellectual force, the rugged character, or the predominant personality. I remember him well, and in many characters, among them *Jesse Rural*, *Geoffrey Dale*, in "The Last Man"; *Sir Anthony Absolute*, and *Admiral Kingston*. In humor he was



exceedingly rich, and his use of pathos was skilful and deeply affecting. He was capable of being coarse, and sometimes he was so, even to the extent of vulgarity. In youth he was slender and elegant, but in later years he became corpulent, so that his *Falstaff* would have needed no padding. One of his notable peculiarities was extreme formality of speech and precision of articulation. For the genuine *Falstaff*, stalwart, rubicund, vigorous, effervescent, overwhelming, he was unfitted. To be fat and jolly and frolicsome is not difficult, for a good actor; to be Shakespeare's formidable *Falstaff*, with his powerful mind, large experience, prodigious affluence of humor, readiness of wit, and stern, aggressive, original individuality, is to be something possible only to genius of a peculiar order, different from that which Blake possessed. The part was not retained in his repertory. He played it at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, as late as 1848, on which occasion the accomplished and elegant comedian Edward Thayer acted *Prince Henry*; but not long after that time he seems to have laid it aside. I have found no explicit record of his appearance in it later than that date. Blake was of English parentage, a native of Halifax, Nova Scotia. His grave is in Greenwood Cemetery.

John Henry Jack, who had acted as a member of several stock companies supporting Hackett,

playing, among other parts, *Justice Shallow*, in "The Merry Wives of Windsor," and who admired Hackett's performance of *Falstaff*, subsequently adopted that part, and in time gained valuable reputation in it. He was a good actor, of considerable natural talent, and experienced and versatile. Long before he assumed *Falstaff* he had acted parts of many kinds, gaining special success as old men. In the course of his career he played in Shakespeare, in Old English Comedy, and in modern drama; his were parts as strongly contrasted as *Sir Anthony Absolute*, in "The Rivals," and *Grandfather Trent*, in "The Old Curiosity Shop." In person he was tall, muscular, stout, and inclined to portliness. His head was large, his hair dark. His complexion was light, his features were regular, the jaws being prominent, so that, facially, his aspect was stern. His eyes were steel-gray in color and cold in expression. His bearing was dignified, his general appearance austere. In temperament he was hard, though not wholly deficient of sensibility. His voice was loud, clear, and strong, and his use of it was peremptory. His manner was self-assertive, even aggressive. His humor was of the rough and jovial order. In his later years his face became almost moon-like and he was so corpulent that he could dress for *Falstaff* with but little, if any, padding. As an actor he respected

his profession and was industrious, zealous, conscientious, and scrupulously careful in the practice of it. His personation of *Falstaff* may, I think, fairly be deemed his best achievement: he considered it to be so, and certainly it marked the height of his professional endeavor. He had diligently studied the part and attentively observed Hackett's acting of it. He did not, and indeed could not, directly copy Hackett, but his portrayal of the *Fat Knight* was colored by the influence of that great exemplar. He was punctilious in adherence to the text, and he retained every particle of the tried, proved, and established stage business. The animalism of *Falstaff*, the burliness of his humor, the greed, the slyness, the relish of life and sport and mischief, the fun of the situations, the jocund, rubicund aspect of the character,—all these elements were within his comprehension; the mind was not entirely so. His *Falstaff*, it was evident, had never been anything better, finer, higher, than the jovial, gross roysterer whom he presented. Aside from this defect in the personation there was in the actor a complete lack of personal charm,—a quality inherent in all great acting and inseparable from it. *Falstaff*, in Shakespeare's historical plays, notwithstanding all his faults and vices, possesses a magnetic personality, and no actor can truly and wholly represent him who cannot reveal





*From a Photograph by Sarony,*

*Author's Collection*

**JOHN H. JACK AS FALSTAFF**

*"Rob me the exchequer the first thing thou doest, and  
do it with unwashed hands, too!"*

**ACT III., SC. 3, FIRST PART**



this quality behind the action of the scenes and arouse in his audience a cordial and lively sympathy. Technical proficiency never supplies the place of this mysterious, subtle, attractive power. Emerson glances at it in saying "Surely he carries a talisman under his tongue."

Jack acted *Falstaff* for the first time, April 26, 1869, at the Broadway Theatre, New York, taking a benefit. The play was the First Part of "King Henry IV.": I find no record of his having played it in the Second Part and believe he never did. The cast comprised Henry Langdon as the *King*, Frederick G. Maeder as the *Prince*, Daniel H. Harkins as *Hotspur*, Mrs. Emma Skerrett as *Lady Percy*, and Mrs. G. H. Gilbert as the *Hostess*. In the course of the next thirty years this comedian travelled far and wide, and he was seen, admired and applauded as *Falstaff* in many cities of America, but his popularity gradually waned, and, whereas he had been a "star," he sank gradually into obscurity and, through no imprudence or neglect of duty, into destitution. At the end of his career he and his wife, Annie Firmin, in her youth a brilliantly handsome, red-haired, gray-eyed, aboundingly vital girl and a capital singer, were admitted to the Forrest Home,—that noble monument to the benevolence of Edwin Forrest,—where they died.



## MISCELLANEOUS MENTION.

Among the players of *Prince Henry* on our Stage should be noted, for purposes of record, ——— Wall, 1768; Mrs. Osborne, 1769; Snelling Powell, 1795; ——— Cleveland, 1796; Lewis Hallam, 1792; John E. Martin, 1802; William Augustus Conway, 1826; George Jones (Count Joannes), 1831; George Barrett, 1836; James W. Wallack, 1838; George Jordan, 1856; Daniel Harkins, 1869; Theodore Hamilton, 1869, and Julia Marlowe, 1896.

*Hotspur* has been conspicuously acted by Lewis Hallam, 1761; ——— Taylor, 1795; ——— Smith, 1782; ——— Ashton, 1790; T. A. Cooper, 1802 (Cooper was specially admired in it as being exceedingly brilliant. "In natural grace," said John Howard Payne—1817—"Cooper is far beyond any actor I ever saw"); Thomas S. Hamblin, 1830; Henry Wallack, 1838; William Hield, 1839; James W. Wallack, the Younger, 1856; Daniel Wilmarth Waller, 1869, and Robert Taber, 1896.

The players of *King Henry the Fourth* in America include ——— Quelch, 1761; Owen Morris, 1768; ——— Collins, 1795; ——— Heard, 1782; ——— Hammond, 1790; Lewis Hallam, 1802; James Fennell, 1806; W. C. Macready, 1826; Alexander Pickering, 1836; Edward L. Davenport (Second Part),

1841; Henry Farren, 1856; Augustus Fenno, 1869, and Henry Meredith, 1896.

Collins was a low comedian and unsuited to the part: he is said to have succeeded in acting peremptory, irritable old men. His true name was Phipps. Pickering is mentioned as an actor of fine presence and useful talents. Henry Farren, an indifferent actor, was the son of the eminent English comedian William Farren. He "went on" for the part, and that was all. He married the highly esteemed actress Kate Reynolds, being her first husband. Augustus Fenno was a person of imposing, dignified bearing, and always correct in action and delivery. He gave a thoroughly good performance of *King Henry*, imposing, vigorous, and, at some points, affecting. E. L. Davenport was an actor of whom it could rightly be said, in Dr. Johnson's words, that he touched nothing that he did not adorn. His performance of *King Henry* was remarkable for royalty of demeanor, which impressed all beholders as innate, not assumed; solemnity and tenderness of feeling, and smooth and sympathetic delivery of the text. On several occasions when I saw Hackett as *Falstaff* the *King* was acted by George Ryer, whom I remember, a portly, dignified person and a highly respectable, conscientious and correct actor, grave in his demeanor, precise in his delivery, and efficient in every respect,

though not memorably impressive. Ryer died at Long Branch, New Jersey, and is there buried.

#### THE MARLOWE-TABER REVIVAL.

A production of the First Part of "King Henry IV." was accomplished at Palmer's Theatre, on March 19, 1896, by Julia Marlowe and Robert Taber, then her husband (deceased, 1904). Miss Marlowe appeared as *Prince Henry* and Taber as *Hotspur*, but the principal feature was the personation of *Falstaff* by William F. Owen. That comedian possessed both eccentricity and broad mirth; his personality was genial, kindly, and winning, and to the comic side of *Falstaff* he gave effective and enjoyable expression. The mind, the predominating character, the victorious joy, the bewitchment, the something that enables *Falstaff* to retain our sympathy and nearly always to prevail in his management of affairs and persons,—these were not more than suggested. The lack of inspiration that hampered Owen showed itself in strenuous effort and in monotony. When the range of expression is limited an actor will repeat the same process and the same effect, many times, at intervals, and when the component parts of an artistic fabric are not suffused and welded with the glow of genial, spontaneous feeling the mechanism with which they



are shaped will be steadily visible. Owen's natural anxiety to succeed and at all times to please fettered his freedom, but aside from that impediment his acting was hard and it seemed almost feverishly concentrated upon comical effects. That there is more in *Falstaff* than mirth is the elemental fact upon full and practical recognition of which a truly successful personation of him must rest. He is the epitome and representative of a radically false and dangerous view of human life,—the view of the conscienceless wit and the laughing sensualist. Owen, in his droll way, elicited much of the superficial fun of the part, yet his impersonation seemed labored and long,—because it really lacked *Falstaff's* humor: it was not inherently and intrinsically humorous. The stage "business" caused laughter; the man seldom or never caused it.

Miss Marlowe was "a pretty fellow enough" in male attire, but she wanted distinction for *Prince Henry* and she was, at all times, quite evidently a woman pretending to be a man. In *Rosalind* or *Viola* or *Imogen* this obvious femininity is not only allowable but necessary and right: the deception of the interlocutors of those characters is assumed as a poetic pre-requirement to the personations. When a woman plays not the part of a woman pretending to be a man, but a man,—and a dashing, manly one at

that,—the simulation must be something more than good (as it is said to have been when Margaret Woffington played *Sir Harry Wildair*) in order that it may create and sustain a pleasing allusion. Miss Marlowe's languid female manner, cast aside only in a few of the more serious passages, did not achieve even that result. Her performance was colorless and ineffective, and the part was soon dropped from her repertory.

The Marlowe-Taber production of "King Henry IV." was a handsome one, some of the scenes being notably accurate and all of them picturesque. The performance, as a whole, was merely mechanical. Robert Taber was expeditious and explosive as *Hotspur*, but not interesting or impressive. Edmund Lawrence was gay and pleasing as *Poins*, without, however, preserving a correct manner toward the *Prince*. Eugenia Woodward skilfully elaborated the business of *Lady Percy's* scene with *Hotspur*. The opening of the play was acted in a way to suggest an incipient riot: the interview between *King Henry* and his nobles is not a scolding-match, and a monarch without dignity and noblemen without even the semblance of manners presented a sorry sight.

## THE SECOND PART.

An alteration of the Second Part of "King Henry IV.," made by Richard Valpy, D.D., for use in schools, was published in 1801 and is accessible. It was acted at Reading, England, where the ecclesiastical editor resided, as a school-master. The text is expurgated. John Philip Kemble made stage versions of both Parts of the play, produced them at Covent Garden, and published them in 1803 and 1804. The Kemble versions have customarily been used on the stage, in America as well as in England, ever since his time.

At least five revivals of the Second Part of "King Henry IV." have been made on the American Stage. The first occurred at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, in February, 1804; the second at the Park Theatre, New York, 1822, when, according to Ireland, it was effected "with the Coronation Scene from 'King Henry V.'" In the Philadelphia revival *Falstaff* was acted by the elder William Warren (1767-1832). In the New York revival John Kent acted *Falstaff*, Robert Campbell Maywood *King Henry*, James Pritchard *Prince Henry*, Thomas Phillips the *Chief Justice*, Mrs. G. H. Barrett (Miss Stockwell) the *Hostess*, and Mrs. Wheatley *Doll Tear-sheet*. The remark of Ireland as to the inclusion of a



scene from another play has misled several writers, among them the learned theatrical antiquarian John Bouvé Clapp, who writes ("Boston Transcript," March 11, 1916) that the New York representation in 1822 "ended with the Coronation Scene from 'Henry V.'" There is no Coronation Scene in "King Henry V."; the return of *King Henry the Fifth* from his coronation occurs in Act V., sc. 6, of the Second Part of "King Henry IV.," and the scene is one of the most essential in the play, as exhibiting the young monarch's intrinsic solidity of character and also the heart-breaking discomfiture of *Falstaff*. The third revival was effected by James H. Hackett, at the Park Theatre, March 15, 1841. Hackett had previously,—February 22, the same year,—by way of providing a novelty on the occasion of his benefit, presented, as an after-piece to a play called "Horse-Shoe Robinson," selected scenes from the Second Part, and had acted *Falstaff*, in association with William Hield as *King Henry the Fifth* (in the last scene), James Gann as the *Chief Justice*, Charles Fisher as *Pistol*, William Chippendale as *Shallow*, Mrs. Wheatley as the *Hostess*, and Mrs. Barry as *Doll Tearsheet*. The favor accorded to this presentation of selected scenes encouraged Hackett to make the revival of the entire play, which was announced in these words: "Monday evening, March 15, 1841, for

the first time these thirty-four years, Shakespeare's highly interesting historical play, distinguished as the Second Part of 'Henry IV.'" That great actor Edward L. Davenport appeared as *King Henry*, William B. Wood was *Prince Henry*, ——— Owens *Bardolph*, David Whiting *Shallow*, Mrs. Broae the *Hostess* and Mrs. Clairville *Doll Tearsheet*. The fourth revival was made by Frank R. Benson, English actor and manager, in the course of a tour of the United States and Canada, in 1914. The fifth and latest revival was made by amateurs, members of the Harvard University chapter of the Delta Upsilon Secret Fraternity, at the Castle Square Theatre, Boston, March 13, 1916: that production was also shown at the Century Theatre, New York, March 18, 1916, *Falstaff* being undertaken by Mr. C. B. Wetherell, *King Henry* by Mr. F. A. Wilmot, and *Prince Henry* by Mr. S. Hurne. The production was made under the direction of Richard Ordynski. The statement, promulgated by the managers of this revival, that "only two productions, so far as can be ascertained, have been made in America of this play, substantially as Shakespeare wrote it," is misleading.—Hackett, in his presentation of it, caused *Falstaff* to leave the scene after his last speech, "I shall be sent for soon at night," and omitted the arrest of *Falstaff* and his removal to

the Fleet Prison, by order of the *Lord Chief Justice*.

#### EARLY COSTUME OF *FALSTAFF*.

Collier mentions a manuscript by Inigo Jones (1572-1652), the famous architect, who was manager of the entertainments provided for royalty in the time of King James the First, in which a person who was to participate in the performance of a Masque at Court is enjoined to be "like a *Sir John Falstaff*, in a robe of russet, quite low, with a great belly, like a swollen man, long moustachios, the shoes short, and out of them great toes like naked feet; buskins to show a great swollen leg." That manuscript is preserved in the archives of the Duke of Devonshire. The description is believed, by Collier, to indicate the appearance of *Falstaff* as he was presented at the Globe or the Blackfriars, in Shakespeare's time; but the assumption is hardly credible: there is nothing in the text of Shakespeare's play to indicate that the *Fat Knight* should be thus attired. He is a frequenter of the Court. It has long been a stage custom to attire him in clothes chiefly of red color. This is because red is a "large" color; it fills the eye; it helps to augment the apparent size of a person dressed in red garments. In my opinion, it is an inappropriate



color for *Falstaff*. The *Hostess* says, in "King Henry V.," Act II., sc. 4, speaking of *Falstaff*, that "'A could never abide carnation; 'twas a color he never liked." "Carnation" signifies, at least by modern usage, "flesh-color or pink." But the *Hostess* makes fritters of many another word, and it has long been a conviction of mine that by "carnation" she means "cardinal" or scarlet. The correct costume for *Falstaff* is shown in the illustrations of this work depicting Hackett and John Jack in the character. The costume worn by Quin gives a good idea of the manner in which the part was dressed in his time and for a considerable period after. Charles Kemble bitterly complained of the absurdity of sending "*Sir John Falstaff*, a knight, the companion, however dissipated, of the *Prince of Wales*, and an officer in the English army, into battle, at the commencement of the fifteenth century, without a particle of defensive armor,—in the very same dress in which he lounges over his sack and sugar in the parlor of the Boar's Head, Eastcheap!" Kemble's protest has been heeded by a few scrupulous later actors of the *Knight*, but not by all. The painting by Edward Grutzner of the Battle of Shrewsbury, showing *Hotspur* dead and *Falstaff* rising from his sham death, displays the costume the latter should wear in that scene.

## JUSTICE SHALLOW.

The original representative of *Justice Shallow* was Kempe, who is believed to have been also the original performer of *Dogberry* and of the *Nurse's* attendant, *Peter*, in "Romeo and Juliet." Thomas Nash designated him, in "An Almond for a Parrot" (1589), as "that most comicall and conceited cavaliere monsieur du Kempe, jestmonger and vice-gerent generall to the ghost of Dick Tarleton." His manner of acting *Shallow* can only be conjectured. He was approved by Heywood, in his "Apology for Actors," and Heywood's approval meant much. Colley Cibber played *Shallow* (1721) at Drury Lane. Davies indicates the special quality of Cibber's performance as "solemn insignificancy," and specifies the exceedingly comic effect of his transition from asking the price of bullocks to grave reflections on mortality "accompanied with an unmeaning roll of his small pig-eyes, and an important utterance of tick! tick! tick! not much louder than the balance of a watch's pendulum." Cibber was of medium size, rather clumsy figure, having thick legs, a fair complexion, sandy hair, small eyes, and a shrill voice. When young he was exceedingly lean and he was nicknamed "Hatchet Face." Personations of *Shallow* which obtained ardent commendation were given by Thomas Dogget, Ben Jon-



*After a Painting by Eduard Grutzner*

### **FALSTAFF AT THE BATTLE OF SHREWSBURY**

*"Embowelled! if you embowel me to-day, I'll give you leave to powder me and eat me too to-morrow."*

**ACT V., SC. 4, FIRST PART**





son, Richard Yates, William Parsons, and Richard Suett. "Who can be grave," asks one old enthusiast, "when Parsons either looks or speaks?" Colley Cibber acted in "King Henry IV." at various times, playing not only *Shallow*, but *Silence*, *Worcester*, and *Glen-dower*.—Old records particularly commend the performance of *Pistol* by Theophilus Cibber, specifying his extravagant demeanor, his blustering delivery, and the long strides with which he walked. Hogarth made a picture of him as *Pistol*, which is specially valuable as showing the costumes used at the time, 1728.

DALY'S ARRANGEMENT.—A THWARTED PURPOSE.

Augustin Daly, who, perhaps, had noticed Dr. Johnson's opinion that "King Henry IV." is divided into two plays only because it is too long for one, and who had wished to offer to his public an attractive novelty, made an abridgment of the two parts of the History, and entertained the purpose of producing it, his plan being to present the most essentially effective portions of each play so combined as to contribute, if possible, a symmetrical and satisfactory whole. Elaborate preparations were made for the execution of this project. The play book was prepared and printed. The scenery was planned and ordered. The dresses

were made. The production would have been exceedingly opulent and beautiful. The parts were cast. Ada Rehan was to have been *Prince Henry*, James Lewis *Falstaff*, George Clarke the *King*, Charles Richman *Hotspur*. The death of Lewis (September 10, 1896) temporarily—and, as the event proved, finally—frustrated Daly's purpose, and the venture was not made. It would have been attractive, but it surely would have been condemned as "a desecration of Shakespeare." Daly's adaptation of the two Histories of "King Henry IV." consists largely of the essential, sequent scenes of the First Part, augmented with a view to continuity and to a recital of the entire story within a reasonable limit of time. Much was necessarily discarded that every lover of Shakespeare would have wished to hear; but the jointure was deftly made, and the presentment of the play, if it had been well accomplished, might have restored to our Stage one of the greatest of dramatic creations, containing delightful characters, wonderfully drawn, and some of the noblest and most glorious language that has ever flowed from the mind of man. Daly's arrangement of the drama includes thirty-eight of the characters. His statement of the scheme is a curious document in theatrical history, and as such I here append it:



## Act I.

Scene 1, London: A Room in the Palace.

“ 2, “ The Boar’s Head Tavern.

“ 3, Rochester: A Road by Gadshill.

“ 4, London: The Boar’s Head Tavern.

## Act. II.

Scene 1, London: A Room in the Palace.

“ 2, “ The Boar’s Head Tavern.

“ 3, Warkworth: A Room in the Castle.

## Act III.

Scene 1, Near Shrewsbury: The Rebel Camp.

“ 2, Coventry: A Road.

“ 3, Shrewsbury: The King’s Tent.

“ 4, “ The Rebel Camp.

“ 5, “ A Plain.

“ 6, “ Tableau: The Battle of Shrewsbury  
and the *King’s* victory.

## Act IV.

\*Scene 1, London: A Street.

“ 2, “ The Jerusalem Chamber.

“ 3, Gloucestershire: *Justice Shallow’s* Garden.

“ 4, London: A Public Place near Westminster Abbey.

Daly did not at once abandon his project. If he had lived it would have been effected. He often talked with me on this subject, and I suggested to

him both John Jack and William Francis Owen for *Falstaff*. The announcement that Ada Rehan would appear as *Prince Henry* prompted Julia Marlowe to assume that part, as she did, at Wallack's Theatre. Emulation hath as many daughters as she hath sons. *Prince Henry* was acted in England by Mrs. Lessingham, at Covent Garden, April 27, 1773, in the Second Part; and in America, in the First Part, by Mrs. Osborne, at Annapolis, in 1769.

## VI.

### THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

*"Nature to woman gave peculiar grace  
To spin, to weep, and cully human race."*

—CHAUCER,—BY POPE.

*"All husbands must or pain or shame endure—  
The wise too jealous are, fools too secure."*

—CONGREVE.

#### ORIGIN, AND CONTENTS, OF THE PLAY.

SHAKESPEARE was thirty-six when he wrote "The Merry Wives of Windsor" (*circa*, 1600), and its first recorded presentation occurred during the Christmas holidays, 1601, in the presence of Queen Elizabeth and her Court, at Windsor. Two editions of it, in quarto, were published in London, prior to the appearance of the authentic version of the play, first given in the Heminge and Condell Folio, 1623. The first quarto appeared in 1602; the second, which is a reprint of the first, in 1619. It is affirmed by Shakespeare editors, and it is maintained by them with excellent argument, that the version contained



in these quartos is spurious, that it was not authorized by Shakespeare, and that they, in fact, were piratical publications. It had, probably, been performed at the Globe Theatre, as well as at Windsor (the title-page of the first quarto certifies that it had been acted "elsewhere" as well as at Court), and also it is probable that the text of the first quarto was surreptitiously obtained from the theatre. It may have been made up partly from the notes taken during a performance, and partly from memory: it is sometimes incoherent and sometimes unintelligible; it interblends the prose with the verse, of which there is little; it prints prose in, typographically, the form of verse; and it omits passages which must have existed in the prompt copy. The two quartos, accordingly, are interesting or valuable chiefly as literary curiosities. Neither of them contains the derogatory allusion to the coat-of-arms of Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote (the three white luces), so that either this reference, implicitly trusted by readers who accept the legend about Shakespeare's deer-stealing in youth, was purposely or accidentally omitted by the persons who supplied the text for the quartos, or else it did not then exist, and Shakespeare must be supposed to have inserted it in his play after the death of the gentleman whom he is said to have revengefully held up to ridicule in the character

of *Justice Shallow*. The comedy as it stands in the Folio is, probably, the play substantially as the author originally wrote it.

According to Ben Jonson, Shakespeare was a laborious writer, one accustomed "to strike the second heat upon the muses' anvil." Many of his pages, accordingly, would have been written over and over again. But in this instance there would have been no need of elaboration. The state of the text in the two quartos is readily understood upon the supposition that it is a garbled version of this play, in which often the language of another writer was used to clothe the Shakespearean ideas and characters. The great popularity of *Falstaff*,—which, before he wrote "The Merry Wives," Shakespeare had already displayed in "King Henry IV." (and, judging from the publication of five separate quarto editions within twenty-four years, that must have been a favorite play),—would account for the avidity with which piratical publishers seized on the comedy. It is an episode, of a texture essentially different from that of the historical plays, and no effort to blend it in their line has succeeded or ever can succeed. The Epilogue of the Second Part of "King Henry IV." contains a promise that "the humble author will continue the story, with Sir John in it." Whether or not Shakespeare

wrote that Epilogue, he did not "continue the story with Sir John in it,"—except in so far as to make known his death, and the manner of it, in "King Henry V.," Act II., scs. 1 and 2. "King Henry V." was written before the comedy (*circa*, 1599), and as the death of *Falstaff* is sequent on and resultant from *King Henry the Fifth's* righteous repudiation of him, at the close of the Second Part of "King Henry IV.," it is impossible, rationally, to lay the comedy between the histories. If it were essential and possible to establish a chronological sequence for the adventures of *Sir John*, it would be better to regard the incidents of "The Merry Wives" as precedent to those of the histories. Charles Knight, indeed, hazards the conjecture that the comedy was, in fact, written before either of them,—but that conjecture cannot be sustained. The comedy undoubtedly exemplifies the reversion by an author to a favorite character, in deference to public demand,—and it is possible that Shakespeare was no more entirely pleased than other writers have been at finding himself necessitated by deference to popular taste to resuscitate a complete and superbly delineated character which he had finished and dismissed: "It was always yet the trick of our English nation," he causes *Falstaff* to say, "if they have a good thing to make it too common."



The plot of "The Merry Wives" is, for the greater part, Shakespeare's own invention. He may, however, have derived, if not some part of it, at least suggestions, from two tales in "Le Tredici Piacevoli Notti," by Straparola, and from an old miscellany of "novels" by Richard Tarleton (died, 1588), entitled "Newes Out of Purgatorie," one of which novels was based on a tale in the "Notti," called "The Lovers of Pisa." In some respects this play resembles one by the German Duke, Henry Julius of Brunswick, who died in 1611. English actors in Shakespeare's time occasionally went to Germany and performed there. It is not known that he himself ever left England. One of those wandering actors might have told him of the plot of the German play. He may, also, have derived some hints from the tale of *Bucciolo* and *Pietro Paulo*, in the "Pecorone" of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, and from "The Fishwives Tale of Brainford," in "Westward for Smelts," if it be true that this collection of stories was accessible to him: the first known edition of it was issued in 1620, but Malone and Steevens assert there was an edition published in 1603, and this may have been extant and known to Shakespeare, in manuscript. He did not hesitate,—as is shown in the history of several of his

compositions,—to utilize the raw material that he had found in the works of other writers.

There is a tradition that he wrote “The Merry Wives” in obedience to the command of Queen Elizabeth, who had expressed the wish to see *Falstaff* in love. This was first promulgated by John Dennis (1657-1734), in the preface to his comedy of “The Comical Gallant, or the Amours of Sir John Falstaff” (an alteration of “The Merry Wives,” in which the original play is greatly changed, which was acted, without success, at Drury Lane, early in 1702). Dennis gave no authority for the tradition that he published with reference to “The Merry Wives,” but it is conjectured that he derived it from Dryden, with whom he had been acquainted, and it is still further conjectured that Dryden derived it from Davenant, who was a boy of eleven years when Shakespeare died, and who lived to become conversant with actors who had associated with Shakespeare and who could communicate recollections of him. Dennis says:

“This comedy was written at her [Queen Elizabeth’s] command, and by her direction, and she was so eager to see it acted that she commanded it to be finished in *fourteen days*; and was afterward, as tradition tells us, very well pleased at the representation.”

No evidence exists to establish the truth of this tradition; yet it has been accepted by many authoritative Shakespeare editors. Dennis subsequently reduced the time of composition to "ten days." It is maintained, with truth, that the comedy falls below Shakespeare's poetic standard, and that it trifles with the great humorous character of *Falstaff*, which he had already so sumptuously drawn, and therefore that it might well have been "written to order," hastily, and within a few days. The fact that it is written almost entirely in prose, which is contrary to Shakespeare's custom, lends a color to this assumption. Furthermore, *Falstaff* certainly is a much less massive and complex character in the comedy than in the history; and it is difficult to understand how, in the absence of extraneous inducement, a great literary artist should choose, in the natural order of mental experience, to distort the consistency and lower the intellectual tone of one of his best creations. Perhaps it is true that Shakespeare wrote this play only because the great command of his sovereign o'erswayed the authority of his judgment. Students who deem the play an indifferent specimen of Shakespeare's power, and who therefore wish to find for the poet a valid excuse for having written it, will accept the explanation made by Dennis and re-echoed by Rowe, Pope, Theobald, Gildon, and



others. Those who read the play as it stands in the quartos may well conclude that its author, if indeed he was responsible for that production, stood in some need of excuse. On the other hand, those students who read it as it stands in the Folio of 1623, and who approve it as a roughly humorous creation, remarkable for ease of invention, variety of character, sprightliness of spirit, and a delicious rural atmosphere, will find no difficulty in ascribing it to a natural impulse of the author's genius; and they need not trouble themselves about any vague tradition with which its story has been garnished. Although the play relates to the lewdness of an old sensualist, and is, therefore, intrinsically and ineradicably vulgar in subject, yet its treatment of that subject is strong, sensible, and humorous. If it depicts the grossness and the craft of animal desire, it does not omit to defeat, humiliate, and ridicule what it thus depicts, while it is measurably redeemed from reproach by its healthfulness of moral quality and influence, and it is brilliant in dramatic and literary attributes. The continuous sprightliness of its dialogue and the joyous physical vitality with which it is animated would alone suffice to maintain it alike in popular acceptance and intellectual esteem. While noting that "the conduct of this drama is deficient" in some respects, "its general power,"

wrote Dr. Johnson, "that power by which all works of genius should finally be tried, is such that perhaps it never yet had reader or spectator who did not think it too soon at an end."

#### ACTORS OF *FALSTAFF* IN THE COMEDY—BRITISH STAGE.

In such old theatrical records as have survived relative to impersonations of *Falstaff* there is little specific description of the manner in which the part was played by any actor. Mention occurs of the different degrees and qualities of humor exhibited by different players, and also of the effects caused by different performances and of the general impression left upon various critical minds. With regard to the ideal and delineation of the character,—whether any marked discrimination was made between *Falstaff* as drawn in the History and *Falstaff* as drawn in the Comedy,—there is, practically, no testimony. The list of prominent actors who have appeared on the British Stage as *Falstaff*, in "The Merry Wives of Windsor," includes Thomas Betterton, 1704; Anthony Boheme, 1720; James Quin, 1720; Dennis Delane, 1743; Edward Shuter, 1758; John Henderson, 1777; Charles Lee Lewes, 1784; Thomas Ryder, 1786; Mrs. Webb, 1786; John Fawcett, 1796; George

Frederick Cooke, 1804; William Dowton, 1824; Mrs. Glover, 1833; George Bartley, 1840; Samuel Phelps, 1848; James Henry Hackett, 1851; Benjamin Webster, 1851; John Ryder, 1861; James R. Anderson, 1884; Herbert Beerbohm-Tree, 1888; George R. Weir, 1900, and Oscar Ashe, 1911. Betterton's performance was first given, in March, 1704, before Queen Anne and her Court; on May 16, following, for his benefit, he repeated it, at Lincoln's Inn Fields. Mrs. Webb had been first known as Miss Child, then as Mrs. Day. She was a good actress, in such parts as *Mrs. Hardcastle* and *Mrs. Malaprop*. She is mentioned in one old record as having "distinguished herself in many corpulent and grotesque characters." A woman playing *Falstaff* would necessarily be repulsive. Mrs. Webb's obesity appears to have been her sole qualification for the part. She died in 1793. Mrs. Glover (1781-1850), originally Julia Betterton, fancifully said to have been descended from the renowned Thomas Betterton of the age of Queen Anne, possessed great and versatile ability as a comedian. She was, in youth, very beautiful,—her person tall, her features regular, her eyes blue and large, her hair dark, her complexion fair. She once tried to act *Hamlet*, and failed. Her appearance as *Falstaff*, effected at the Haymarket Theatre, for her benefit, appears to have been made by way of pro-





from an Old Print

Collection of David Belasco, Esq.

JOHN HENDERSON AS *FALSTAFF*  
(In "The Merry Wives of Windsor")

*"Here is a letter will say somewhat."*

ACT IV., Sc. 5



viding "a novelty" and in a spirit of frolic. She was one of the best stage "old women" ever seen.

Henderson's performance of *Falstaff*, in the Comedy, is somewhat minutely described by Boaden:

"Henderson would sometimes delight to show, without language, the rapid and opposite emotions as they rise and chase each other in the mind. A masterly effort of this kind was *Falstaff's* reading the letter from *Mrs. Ford* [Act IV., sc. 5, of the original] in the presence of the 'foolish carrion', *Mrs. Quickly*. First you saw that he had his 'belly full of Ford'; her messenger even was an object of detestation. He glanced over the beginning of the letter and pished at its apologies. He turned again to the messenger to see how her air was in unison with the language of her mistress. The cudgel of *Ford* then seemed to fall upon his shoulders, and he shrunk from the enterprise. He read a sentence or two of the letter: a spark of lechery twinkled in his eye, which turned for confirmation of his hopes upon love's ambassadress; and thus the images of suffering and desire, of alarm and enjoyment, succeeded one another, until at last the oil of incontinency in him settled above the water of the Thames, and 'the divinity of odd numbers' determined him to risk the *third* adventure."

#### PLAYERS OF *THE MERRY WIVES*—BRITISH STAGE.

Conspicuous among the performers, on the British Stage, of, respectively, *Mistress Ford* and *Mistress Page* were Mrs. Bracegirdle and Mrs. Barry, 1704; Mrs. Heron and Mrs. Butler, 1734 (Margaret Wof-



fington played *Mistress Ford* in 1743); Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Barrington, 1758; Louisa Nisbett and Eliza Vestris, 1840; Fanny Cooper and Mrs. Marston, 1848; Mrs. Charles Kean and Mrs. Keeley, 1851; Rose Leclercq and Mrs. John Wood, 1874; Alice Lingard and Rose Leclercq, 1889; and Mrs. Kendal and Ellen Terry, 1902.

#### MASTER FORD.

Many actors, a few of them of first rank, have played *Master Ford*. No actor could reasonably be expected to commend himself to public sympathy in such a repellent character. The utmost that any actor can do with it is to exhibit the morbid fancies, mean suspicion, irritable temper, petty craft, and treacherous conduct, at once contemptible and pitiable, of a commonplace man, furiously jealous. The dreadful and wretched passion of Jealousy is, in varying degrees, almost universal, and Shakespeare has devoted painfully exact and detailed attention to its workings and their exposition. *Othello*, *Iago*, *Leontes*, *Posthumus Leonatus*, *Marc Antony*, *Claudio*, *Orsino*, *Demetrius* and *Lysander*, *Troilus*, *Master Ford*,—all, in one way or another, suffer under its doubly cruel workings. *Ford* is prominent, yet the part is little more than a “feeder” for *Falstaff*. On the British

Stage, in earlier times, the more important representatives of it were Richard Wroughton, 1779; Alexander Pope, 1796; John Philip Kemble, 1804; Charles Mayne Young, 1811; John Cooper, 1840, and Charles Kean, 1851. Wroughton, described as being knock-kneed and having a round, inexpressive face but an agreeable smile, is said to have been "inspired to excellence" in this character; the quality of the excellence is not specified. Critics of Charles Kean,—who, probably, played the part for the purpose of strengthening a cast which included Mrs. Kean as *Mistress Ford* and Bartley as *Falstaff*, and afforded no other opening for himself,—appear to have discerned surprising merit in his performance. One observer found "the nervous, irritable manner which he displayed in the scene when he induces *Falstaff* to undertake his mission to *Mistress Ford*" amply evidential "of how deeply and correctly Kean has studied the peculiarities of the jealous husband." Westland Marston discerned in Kean's *Ford* "an adumbration of his serious acting," and declared that "the mingled agitation, perplexity, and humor of the scene where *Master Ford*, for his own ends, eggs on *Falstaff* to tempt his wife, and of subsequent scenes; the restless aside glances and gestures by which the actor revealed his jealous pangs; his rage at the intending seducer, and his shame at himself for prac-

tising a mean stratagem, were so expressed as to prove at once the reality of his passion and to provoke irrepressible mirth at the oddity of its manifestation."

#### AMERICAN STAGE.

The first performance of "The Merry Wives of Windsor" that was given in America occurred at the Southwark Theatre, Philadelphia, March 2, 1770. The cast is unknown,—but it is credibly surmised that Lewis Hallam acted *Ford*, with Owen Morris as *Evans* and Stephen Wools as *Pistol*. David Douglass, who had assumed *Falstaff* in the History, First Part (New York, December 18, 1761), is believed to have then performed it in the Comedy. In 1779-'82 "the American Company," as it was called, appeared in the Island of Jamaica, and among the plays then and there performed was "The Merry Wives," presented October 27, 1779, with a beginner named Goodman (who had been employed in a lawyer's office) as *Falstaff*, Lewis Hallam as *Ford*, Thomas Wignell as *Page*, Mrs. Morris as *Mistress Ford*, and Miss Wainwright as *Mistress Page*. Nothing is known of those performances, beyond the fact of their occurrence, and, in the latter instance, some particulars of the cast. The first performance of the comedy given in New York occurred, October 5, 1789, at the John



Street Theatre, *Falstaff* being personated by the English actor John Harper, whose moderate merits were duly recognized. Revivals of the comedy occurred, within the following seven years, at Philadelphia, March 30, 1790, June 1, 1795, and March 7, 1796; at Baltimore, October 29, 1795, and at the Boston Theatre February 13, 1796; but only two players of *Falstaff* are mentioned in the records of those presentations,—Charles E. Whitlock, who acted at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, June 1, 1795, and J. B. Williamson, who acted at the Boston Theatre in the spring of 1796. William Warren, the Elder, played the part in New York, appearing there for the first time after an absence of fifteen years, at the Park Theatre, September 16, 1813, and Thomas Hilson played it there, January 15, 1829: both were public favorites. Carpenter, writing in 1810, said of Warren,—who on the Philadelphia Stage had long been conspicuous as *Falstaff*,—"his fame in the fat old knight is built on so solid, long established foundation that, as nothing can increase, so nothing can shake or diminish it." The most important performance of *Falstaff*, in "The Merry Wives of Windsor,"—certainly, after Warren's—was that given by James Henry Hackett in 1832, the year in which Warren died. Hackett was as supreme in performance of the character in the Comedy as he was in both parts of

the History. Other performers of the *Fat Knight*, in "The Merry Wives," on our Stage, either contemporaneous with or subsequent to Hackett, were John Hamburg Dwyer, 1839; Charles Bass, 1850; Benedick de Bar, 18—; William Evans Burton, 1853; Charles Fisher, 1872; William Henry Crane, 1885; Herbert Beerbohm Tree, 1895; George Clarke, 1898; Louis Calvert, 1910; and Thomas A. Wise, 1916.

## AUGUSTIN DALY'S PRESENTATIONS.

Daly made three revivals of "The Merry Wives," the first, at Daly's Fifth Avenue Theatre, on November 19, 1872; the second and third at Daly's Theatre, where it now (1916) stands, on, respectively, January 14, 1886, and January 11, 1898. On those occasions the principal parts were cast as follows:

	1872.	1886.	1898.
<i>Falstaff</i> ,	Charles Fisher	Charles Fisher	George Clarke
<i>Ford</i> ,	George Clarke	John Drew	Charles Richman
<i>Page</i> ,	Louis James	Otis Skinner	John Craig
<i>Evans</i> ,	William P. Davidge	Charles Leclercq	Herbert Gresham
<i>Dr. Caius</i> ,	W. J. Lemoyne	William Gilbert	Joseph Herbert
<i>Slender</i> ,	James Lewis	James Lewis	Wilfred Clarke
<i>Mistress Ford</i> ,	Fanny Davenport	Ada Rehan	Ada Rehan
<i>Mistress Page</i> ,	Fanny Morant	Virginia Dreher	Catharine Lewis
<i>Anne Page</i> ,	Sara Jewett	Edith Kingdon	Lettice Fairfax
<i>Dame Quickly</i> ,	Mrs. G. H. Gilbert	Mrs. G. H. Gilbert	Mrs. G. H. Gilbert

Daly made his own arrangement of the play for the stage—producing a better version for the second revival than for the first, and using it also in the

third. This version was printed for him, in association with a photo-lithographic fac-simile (made by W. Griggs, under the superintendence of the late Dr. F. J. Furnivall) of the 1602 quarto, and it is extant. It presents the play in four acts and eleven scenes, requiring nine different settings, and it follows, in the main, the text of the First Folio. The acting arrangement of this comedy usually employed, before Daly's adaptation, is a modification of the one made by J. P. Kemble, for the Covent Garden presentations, which was published in 1797 and 1804. Daly, in right and commendable deference to refined taste, exercised care to modify or to expunge from the text of "The Merry Wives" every possible gross phrase, and he caused it to be acted, as nearly as its content and quality will permit, in conformity with refinement.

The dressing of Daly's first presentation mixed the fashions of the time of King Henry the Fourth, 1400, and of Queen Elizabeth, 1558, in a wholly unauthorized way and produced an injudicious medley. His second revival adhered to the fashions of 1400, and was, in both dressing and scenery, memorable for sumptuousness and beauty. Mr. Edward H. Bell (who appeared in it as *Fenton*) was the principal deviser of the costumes. The scenery was painted by Henry E. Hoyt. The third revival, made more as a



stop-gap than anything else, employed some of the second, retouched and furbished for the occasion, with some new scenes and dresses, eked out by borrowing from other productions (notably "The Taming of the Shrew") which Daly then had in stock.

#### FISHER'S *FALSTAFF*.

The truly notable feature of Daly's revivals was Charles Fisher's personation of *Falstaff*. In the comedy, as contrasted with the histories, this character is largely taken for granted: he is much inferior in the comedy to the *Falstaff* of the histories. Not all the Merry Wives in Windsor or in England could ever have bamboozled the *Falstaff* of the histories. But "wit," as Shakespeare causes his *Fat Knight* to say, "may be made a Jack-a-Lent, when 'tis upon ill employment," and we must take the character in "The Wives" as we find it,—a somewhat trivial, yet recognizable and certainly comic, dilution of a supremely fine original.

Fisher had considered the *Falstaff* of the histories and colored his mind with him, as a sort of background and basis of his "Merry Wives" assumption, but he wisely made no endeavor to go behind the actual conditions of the comedy. He presented the *Knight* as a man of good birth, of a certain innate



*From a Photograph by Sarony*

*Author's Collection*

**CHARLES FISHER AS *FALSTAFF***  
(In "*The Merry Wives of Windsor*")

*"But what says she to me? be brief, my good she-Mercury."*

**ACT II., Sc. 2**





dignity, of sturdy intellect, of large experience, and, above all, of a most happy and jocular humor. So far he coincided with the conception of Shakespeare. The radical defect of his performance resulted from the positive refinement and gentleness of his nature. He somewhat lacked the requisite physical corpulence, and he wholly lacked the inherent, indurated harshness and grossness, the unmitigated sensuality and greed, upon which that conception rests. This, certainly, was a "good defect," if ever there was such a thing. But *Falstaff* is a coarse animal, without conscience, without sentiment, and certainly without that picturesque grace which was a striking peculiarity of Fisher's embodiment. In personal appearance his *Falstaff* was singularly handsome,—with a rosy face, snow-white hair, clear, merry gray eyes, and gay attire. The head, especially in profile view, was an exponent of fine intellectuality. In his use of the text Fisher was perfectly proficient. The description of the buck-basket misadventure was given with a warmth of feeling and variety of tone, with a sincerity, a vigor and earnestness, a complete knowledge and use of verbal values and of pause, and an entire absence of farce that made it vivid and irresistibly comic. The actor's thorough appreciation of every shade of *Falstaff's* involuntary humor in descriptive epithet and simile was clearly shown at this point, and

it revealed his acuteness of perception not less than his scholar-like study. In this scene, and in the first scene with *Master Ford*, Fisher as *Falstaff* was at the best of truth and humor. Making due allowance for the natural dissonance which the actor, in this instance, could not wholly conceal, his personation was an able and admirable work of art,—consistent throughout, sustained, and invariably amusing.

Fanny Morant's ample person, abundant vitality, joyous humor, ringing voice, and rapidity of speech, not to mention her proficient art, made her particularly happy in all such parts as *Mistress Ford* and *Mistress Page*, both of which I often saw her act. Her employment of intonation and emphasis was most felicitous. She was, next to Mrs. Vernon, the best player of *Mrs. Candour* seen on the Stage in my time. The acting of *Mistress Page* was a trifle to her, but mention of it here affords occasion for a word of cordial tribute to the memory of an actress of exceptional ability. She was long connected with Wallack's Theatre, later with Booth's, and finally with Daly's.

#### GEORGE CLARKE'S *FALSTAFF*.

George Clarke's performance of *Falstaff* was wholly perfunctory. He had seen Fisher and other actors in the part, and he remembered part of what he had

seen them do. Though far inferior to Fisher as an artist, he was a thoroughly good, well-trained, widely experienced actor. He was a man of hard and selfish nature and therefore he had not the same disadvantage which impeded Fisher in this part. But it was "out of his line": he assumed it because Daly cast him for it, and that was the only reason: he made clear and cogent *Falstaff's* place in the story and he brought out some of the old familiar points with emphasis. But the image presented, taken for all in all, was nothing more than a fat man in a quandary. All the humor was in the situations and the language; not a particle of it in the actor,—whether in face, voice, demeanor, or personality. There was no intrinsic weight, no knighthood, no stalwart fibre, no predominance, no background of suggested experience; above all, no identification with a man who had ever been anything else than a foolish dangler after women. No man, whether in a play or in life, reaches all at once the essential individuality that makes him what he is. Clarke's make-up for *Sir John* was good: he was indebted for it to Mr. Clement Hopkins, a young actor in Daly's company, who made him up each night that he played the part. He contributed nothing to the impersonation or exposition of the character, and he never played the part after Daly withdrew the comedy, on January 23.



## OTHER PERFORMANCES IN DALY'S REVIVALS.

Ada Rehan's personation of *Mistress Ford* was, necessarily, one of the subsidiary performances of her brilliant career: all the parts in "The Merry Wives" are exceptionally well drawn, distinct and vigorous, and all give scope for the actor's art, but *Falstaff* predominates over all the rest, and interest in the *Wives* is but reflected from him. The character of *Mistress Ford*, being, as it is, based upon intrinsic goodness, fine animal spirits, a buoyant temperament, and eager aptitude for piquant mischief and banter, was easy of representation for Miss Rehan, and she carried it with delightful ease and exhilarating humor,—speaking the words with arch significance and limpid fluency, and inspiring the action with a continuous flood of the sunshine of merriment. She was, in seeming as well as in fact, too young (twenty-six) for the part, when she first played it (1886), and though she and Miss Dreher (also then too young), as *Mistress Page*, dashed through the sportive scenes with jubilant enthusiasm, promoting mischief with delightful eagerness and contagious merriment, their proceedings lacked sense of conviction. Miss Rehan's performance was much improved, when repeated in 1898, but it was, at best, merely a passing incident. The *Mistress Page* of Catherine Lewis



*From a Steel Engraving*

*Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

**BENEDICK DE BAR AS FALSTAFF**

(In "The Merry Wives of Windsor")

*"Sometimes the beam of her view gilded my foot,  
sometimes my portly belly."*

ACT I., SC. 3





(1898) was piquant, jovial, and charmingly mischievous.

Daly closed his arrangement of "The Merry Wives" with the following Epilogue, patched up from several speeches of *Sir John's*:

"Men of all sorts take a pride to gird at me. The brain of this foolish, confounded clay, Man, is not able to invent anything that tends to laughter more than I invent, or is invented on me. I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men. Yet it was always a trick of our English nation if they have a good thing to make it too common.—But enough. I will imitate the honorable Romans in brevity. I commend me to thee, I commend thee, and I leave thee. Thine, by yea and no (which is as much as to say, as thou usest him), Jack Falstaff with my familiars; John, with my brothers and sisters; and Sir John, with all the world!"

DISCURSIVE COMMENT.—BURTON.—DE BAR.—CRANE.

William Evans Burton acted *Falstaff* in the Comedy, never in either part of the History. The characters in which that great comedian was superlative were those in which unctuous humor combined with eccentricity is enhanced by the touch of pathos, but most of the parts he played (his repertory comprised 184 of record) were exclusively comic. He was one of the most amusing of comedians, and the broader style of his humorous acting was precisely

suited to *Falstaff*, as portrayed in "The Merry Wives." His *Fat Knight* had mind and authority. Burton's eyes were dark and brilliant, his face was wonderfully expressive, and in acting he made much use of it, often inciting laughter without speaking a word. He was specially comic in the scene at Herne's Oak: his delivery of *Falstaff's* soliloquy beginning "The Windsor bell hath struck twelve" was the perfection of drollery.

Benedict De Bar (1814-1877), an English actor who came to America in 1835 and, about seventy years ago, was a favorite performer on the New York Stage, had his career chiefly in the theatres of the West and South—largely in New Orleans and St. Louis. His personation of *Falstaff* was much admired; outside of the northern and eastern cities, indeed, he was considered a formidable rival to Hackett, in that character. I remember him well; a stout, sturdy person, florid in complexion, having gray eyes, a deep bass voice, and a general aspect of vigor and command. He had played all sorts of parts, though principally in melodrama and comedy; he was thoroughly experienced, his manner was blunt, his speech peremptory. I never saw him act *Falstaff*, but I know him to have been possessed of abundant humor and mental force, and I doubt not his performance of *Sir John* justified the high esteem in which it was held. He played the

part 150 times, in "The Merry Wives of Windsor."

William Henry Crane, now in his seventy-second year, whose professional career has extended over a period of fifty-three years, has seldom acted in the Shakespearean drama, not from lack of either interest in its rich resources of humorous character or of ambition to excel in it, but because by stress of circumstance he has been steadily constrained to production of plays of contemporary interest. In 1877 he formed a partnership with the eccentric comedian Stuart Robson (1838-1903), which lasted twelve years, and while thus associated he incidentally ventured in Shakespeare, playing *Dromio of Ephesus*, in "The Comedy of Errors"; *Sir Toby Belch*, in "Twelfth Night," and (1885) *Falstaff*, in "The Merry Wives of Windsor." Robson, in the latter play, acted *Slender*. Crane retained *Falstaff* in his repertory for several years after his partnership with Robson ended. He has invariably shown a keen perception of character and the faculty of investing each of his impersonations with a distinct individuality. He copied no model in playing *Falstaff*. He apprehended the part through spontaneous sympathy with jovial humor, enjoyment of living, and the propensity to fun and laughter. He did not indicate any background of massive, formidable character, but he did not degrade the *Knight* by buffoonery; he strove to cause mirth by



lending himself to the promotion of frolic, and in that design he succeeded. After about 1894 he laid the part aside.

#### HERBERT BEERBOHM-TREE.

Herbert Beerbohm-Tree played *Falstaff*, in "The Merry Wives of Windsor," for the first time at the Crystal Palace, Sydenham, September 13, 1888, Lewis Waller appearing as *Ford*, Lady Monckton as *Mistress Ford*, and Rose Leclercq as *Mistress Page*. After a number of performances at that place Tree transferred his production, January 2, 1889, to the Haymarket Theatre, where Alice Lingard succeeded Lady Monckton. Since then he has effected several revivals of the play,—notably at His Majesty's Theatre, June 10, 1902, when Mrs. Kendal played *Mistress Ford* and Ellen Terry played *Mistress Page*. Tree acted the *Fat Knight* in America, for the first time, at Abbey's Theatre, New York, on February 15, 1895. On May 25, 1916, he again played the part in that city, at the New Amsterdam Theatre, Edith Wynne Matthison appearing with him as *Mistress Ford* and Henrietta Crosman as *Mistress Page*.

The distinctive felicities of Tree's acting are chiefly technical,—the felicities of make-up, supple interpretation, icy nonchalance, mordant sarcasm, entire assur-



*From a Photograph*

*Collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

**WILLIAM H. CRANE AS *FALSTAFF***  
(In "*The Merry Wives of Windsor*")

*"Indeed, I am in the waist two yards about; but I am  
now about no waste; I am about thrift."*

ACT I., SC. 3





ance, proficient execution, and large and expressive gesture. His elocution is often defective. He possesses considerable intellectual force; he has a voracious propensity of emulation; his confidence in his ability to play any kind of part transcends even that of *Bottom*: at his best he is picturesque, expert, and sharply effective. The representative of *Falstaff* in "The Merry Wives" will always sufficiently succeed if he presents an image of vainglorious selfishness, rubicund sensuality, and expeditious assurance, alternating with comic annoyance and rueful discontent,—the vexation and resentment of a man made ridiculous and contemptible by two women who are bright and piquant but who certainly are not delicate. The ideal is not difficult to grasp nor is the experience, in its commingling of animalism, conceit, almost wilful obtuseness, and jovial levity, difficult to portray.

Tree, from the first,—and, in the passage of time, his performance has not radically changed, but only has strengthened with repetition and grown in the essential attribute of authority,—indicated a just perception of the part, and, although his humor was always thin and dry, he gives a more amusing performance of it than would naturally be expected. The physical form of *Falstaff* is not difficult to assume, and Tree assumes it with more than usual attention to those effects of shape, modelling,

demeanor, and expression that are produced upon the mind by the outward aspect of the body. But, in contemplation, the aspect of his *Falstaff* grows tiresome. The face is inexpressive, or, rather, its expression is set: it is like a sculptor's model of the face of *Falstaff* and, practically, it never changes. The stolidity of it is the inevitable consequence of the mass of hair, wax, grease-paint, and (apparently) what actors call "plumpers"—wads of cotton to distend the cheeks. It is not possible for a man whose humor is saturnine and glacial to invest himself with a humorous personality that is richly unctuous, mellow, copious, joyous,—the comic exuberance of a droll animal. Tree's *Falstaff* was waggish and satirical, replete with excess of agile action, nimble in mind and trickily effective.

This comedian is a good artist, and though in this part he did not diffuse a glamour of illusion, it was because a feat of professional skill, a strenuous effort of virtuosity, must necessarily be less authoritative and convincing than a genuine personation of character. By natural aptitude, bent of mind, affinity of temperament, predisposition of taste,—or whatever motive it be which impels the artistic nature in its choice of characters,—Tree is no more fitted for *Falstaff* than John Drew is for *Hamlet* or Tyrone Power for *Charles Surface*. To see Tree at his best



From a Photograph by Floyd

Courtesy of Louis V. De Foe, Esq.

**HERBERT BEERBOHM-TREE AS *FALSTAFF***  
(In "*The Merry Wives of Windsor*")

*"I had been drowned, but that the shore was shelvy and shallow,—a death I abhor; for the water swells a man; and what a thing should I have been when I had been swelled! I should have been a mountain of mummy!"*

ACT III., Sc. 5





it is essential to see him as *Demetrius*, in "The Red Lamp," or as *Captain Swift*, or, perhaps, as *Gringoire*. In *Falstaff* the wonder is not that he does it well but that he does it at all. Much of the comic effect produced by him in that part is due to the language of it, which is exceedingly droll. Some of it, though, is due to the actor's unwarranted, clownish expedients of downright farce, which in *Falstaff* are incorrect. "The Merry Wives of Windsor," notwithstanding it contains some farcical elements, is not farce but comedy, rich in character and true in the portrayal of manners. A *Falstaff* who crawls on the floor, encumbered with the dress of the old fat woman of Brentford, as Tree's *Falstaff* does, while *Ford* belabors him over the buttocks, is nothing superior to the "slap-stick" clown of the circus. In several of his revivals Tree has provided the comedy with handsome dresses and scenery, some of the exterior scenes being dominated by views of the stately and venerable Windsor Castle.

## SHAKESPEARE FRITTERED AT THE NEW THEATRE.

"And so went to the King's, and there saw 'The Merry Wives of Windsor,' which did not please me at all, in no part of it."—"PEPYS'S DIARY," August 15, 1667.

A performance of "The Merry Wives of Windsor" more incompetent and dreary than that given at the

New Theatre, January 26, 1910, has not been seen. *Falstaff* without humor, *Ford* without credibility, *Mistress Ford* without mirth, *Evans* and *Caius* without character, *Page* without meaning, *Slender* without comicality, *Fenton* without charm, and *Mrs. Quickly* without pungency constituted a ghastly group, depressing to behold and melancholy to remember. The comedy of "The Merry Wives" is intrinsically and ineradicably vulgar in subject, and when it is not brilliantly acted the indelicacy of its subject offends not only good taste, but tolerance. The usual custom, in presenting it, has been, after cleansing the text, to animate the acting in such a way as to divert attention from the element of coarseness in the story by brilliancy in the display of contrasted character and unctuous humor, those being the attributes in which the play is peculiarly rich. In the presentment made at the New Theatre the dialogue had not been thoroughly expurgated or judiciously altered, and a style of acting had been adopted which, being partly that of comedy and partly that of farce, was hybrid and ineffective, so that the representation became insufferably tedious. The scenery with which the play was invested, particularly that of the last act, was exceptionally fine, conveying a sense of stability, helping the effect of illusion, and presenting the merit,—infrequent on our Stage,—of rich, mellow, and deftly



blended colors. The only entirely competent impersonation,—competent because consistently mirthful and continuously harmonious with the frolicsome spirit of the comedy,—was that of *Mistress Page*, by Rose Coghlan. Among the associate performances those of *Shallow* by Ben Johnson, the *Host* by William McVay, and *Anne Page* by Leah Bateman-Hunter were commendable for definite purpose and a touch of nature. Miss Bateman-Hunter, indeed, presented a person much too sophisticated to be “sweet Anne Page,” but an arch, piquant, charming girl.

Louis Calvert, as *Falstaff*, disappointed an eager expectation. That character had long been absent from our Stage, and a true and fine recurrence of it would have been warmly welcomed. The turgid, skipping, mechanical pot-belly presented by Mr. Calvert was not *Falstaff*, and the proffer of it, as an impersonation of the character, by an actor of ability and experience, could be viewed only with amazement. Though the *Falstaff* of the Comedy is vastly inferior to the *Falstaff* of the History, he does not, in course of transit to the former, cease to be a sagacious and humorous person, and experience has proved that the best result, in acting him, is obtained when he is portrayed as, in predominant characteristics, the same man, shown under circumstances which, though humili-

ating, are comical. One remark that he makes is especially significant, as indicative of a correct ideal of the part. "See now," says the discomfited *Knight*, "how wit may be made a Jack-a-lent, when 'tis upon ill employment": and later he exclaims, submissive to taunts from all sides, "Ignorance itself is a plummet o'er me. Use me as you will." *Falstaff*, even in the Comedy, has intellect, worldly wisdom, strong character, abundant, inexhaustible, overwhelming, spontaneous humor as well as rubicund sensuality: he revels in his jocund vigor, and he cannot help being comic, even in his narrative of the abject humiliations that befall him. Calvert's *Falstaff* was a large, business-like person, wearing an obtrusively obvious false paunch, moving hurriedly and lightly (as a man "in the waist two yards about" could not do, and as *Falstaff* never does), speaking in a thin, puny voice, doing stage business in a perfunctory manner, and diffusing a fog of dulness. Two or three times in the course of the performance a mild impulse to laughter was afforded by the spoken word; not even once by exposition of the character; yet the effect of an embodiment of *Falstaff* is absolutely dependent on personality,—the incarnation of his unctuous cheerfulness, his rosy self-complacency, his jocular drollery, his ludicrous vanity, his comic sapience, and the usual merry shrewdness of his sophisticated mind. An

actor who does not cause any effect of mirth either in portraying *Falstaff's* ridiculous carnality and grotesque disgust or in uttering his exultant strain of egotistical loquacity and exuberant invective has not comprehended the character and is completely unsuited to it.

Louis Calvert is of the older, and, in my judgment, better school of acting than is represented, to any considerable extent, on our Stage, or that of England, to-day. It is, I believe, deemed by some persons a disparagement to be described as "an actor of the Old School." In my esteem the term is one of the highest encomium,—because the principle of the "Old School" in Acting is Nature, made better (to use the informing words of Shakespeare) "by an Art that Nature makes." It means, to me, an actor who "knows his business"; who is both a mechanic and an artist; it means an actor who is trained and proficient in his vocation, and who gives the people of his best,—making that best as good as he possibly can make it. Such an actor, and only such, could have given some of the performances which Calvert has given and which it has been my good fortune to witness,—among them, his personation of *James Mortimer*, in Pinero's fine comedy of "The Thunderbolt," and the comparatively slight part of *Albert Thompsett*, in "Don." I have been informed that,



when acting *Falstaff*, at the New Theatre, he was dangerously ill and that he appeared against the positive order of the physician attending him. That might well explain the deplorably inadequate performance of *Falstaff* by an actor of whom a truly fine impersonation was reasonably expected. Calvert has often played the part, not only in "The Merry Wives" but in the History (First Part, Lyric Theatre, London, May 11, 1909), and it is earnestly hoped that he will act the part again, in America, in both plays, and under fortunate conditions, when neither he nor his admirers need claim indulgence for him, on any ground whatever.

Without a good *Falstaff* the comedy is barren. It was worse than barren in this revival. A. E. Anson (in some parts a capital actor) made *Ford* peevish, snarling, violent, not jealous; and, apparently despising the part, he played it in a wooden manner, completely ineffective,—substituting mechanical bluster for the adequate expression of mental distress, and snapping a dog-whip to indicate emotion. His business of hurling soiled clothes from the buck-basket into the faces of his associates in the scene would be beneath the dignity of a clown in a pantomime. Edith Wynne Matthison, whose aptitude is exclusively for serious drama, gave an affected and tedious performance of *Mistress Ford*, sour in aspect, finical in

demeanor, and crude in method,—seeming, beside the buoyant embodiment of *Mistress Page* by Rose Coghlan, to be the constrained effort of a novice. Ferdinand Gottschalk, while making *Slender* sufficiently vacuous, failed to make him amusing, because he is an actor of thin and dry personality, who, as a rule, harps continually on one string. Some points of the stage-management would have been discreditable to the direction of a society of juvenile amateurs: *Dr. Caius*, for example, answered *Mrs. Quickly's* question about the green box (“Is this it?”) without even looking at the object in her hand, and *Falstaff*, when sending his boy to *Page's* house, which was conspicuous on the right of the stage, drove him out at the left. Trifles of course; but a *competent* theatrical representation consists of a mass of individually trifling details, each one of which is correct. The one bright remembrance remaining from this production of “The Merry Wives of Windsor” is the blithe acting of Rose Coghlan. It was Indian summer, indeed, with that actress: the roses were no longer in full bloom: but she retained the dash and sparkle of old times: she could animate the scene; she acted with vigor, freedom, and precision; and, acting in a large theatre, she skilfully used a broad method to procure the requisite large, bold effects. There is always a certain comfort to be derived from contemplation of a competent artist.

Indian summer? True: but, as an old rhyme prettily declares:

“At four o’clock in the afternoon  
’Tis warm as morning, and as boon.”

An incompetent production of one of Shakespeare’s plays is mischievous in itself and in its inevitable consequence. It wearies the audience and it tends to disseminate and strengthen the wrong opinion,—eagerly favored by exclusively commercial managers, all of whom are, naturally, opponents of the higher dramatic art,—that the plays of Shakespeare are no longer of any practical interest or use. Four productions of Shakespeare,—“Antony and Cleopatra,” “Twelfth Night,” “The Winter’s Tale,” and “The Merry Wives of Windsor,”—were accomplished at the New Theatre, and not even the best of them surpassed the standard of mediocrity. The production and acting of “Twelfth Night” was vastly inferior to the production and acting of that comedy by the Sothern-Marlowe company,—Sothern, indeed, being the best *Malvolio* that has been seen on our Stage, except that of Henry Irving, since the days of Charles Fisher; while to record the New Theatre presentment of “Twelfth Night” as equal to, or even in any way comparable with, the production of it which was effected by Augustin Daly, in 1893, would be merely to



exhibit ridiculous ignorance or gross incompetence of judgment.

The endeavors made at the New Theatre were treated with solicitous lenience,—the general disposition being to commend everything done there. That tone of “criticism” may be good-natured, but it is not salutary, it is not just, and it is not really kind. In theatres that are under avowedly commercial control actors are often compelled to perform against disadvantages of hurtful restriction, yet the performances thus given are expected to be meritorious and are condemned or ignored if they are not so. The New Theatre was supposed to be free from commercial restraint and ignorant, selfish dictation, and, accordingly, it was presumed that the plays presented in it would always be of the highest order, and that the performances given in it would satisfy a reasonably high standard of artistic merit. Several objectionable plays were admitted to that stage, and the average merit of acting there was lower than the average merit of acting in the best of the “commercial” houses. The founders of the New Theatre began a magnificent work when they made and endowed that institution. Their venture failed, and the experiment is not likely to be repeated. Many years will pass before an attempt as generous and as liberal, involving the investment of millions of

dollars, will again be made, to serve the cause of the stage by such practical favor toward the Art of Acting; and if it ever should be made the purpose of it will not be accomplished by fatuous affectation of "new thought," the ministry of fads, and the encouragement of that wretched humbug, long prevalent in the Theatre of America, The Stage Producer,—a pestiferous incubus that battens on the brains of actors.

JAMES K. HACKETT'S REVIVAL.—THOMAS A. WISE.—  
VIOLA ALLEN.—HENRIETTA CROSMAN.

An elaborate production of "The Merry Wives" was accomplished, March 20, 1916, under the management of James K. Hackett, at the Criterion Theatre, New York, in which Thomas A. Wise appeared as *Falstaff*, Viola Allen as *Mistress Ford*, and Henrietta Crosman as *Mistress Page*. Hackett had planned to appear as *Falstaff*, but he was taken suddenly and severely ill with influenza and thus was incapacitated from making a venture which would have been exceptionally interesting, and which it is hoped he may yet attempt: he possesses the imposing figure, the broad style, and the eccentric humor necessary for the part of *Falstaff*, and though he never saw his father act the part (he was two years old when the elder Hackett died) he is not unacquainted with the paternal example.

The scenic setting that Hackett provided for the comedy, though elaborate and costly, was not good. The scenery, painted by Josef Urban, was displayed under the stage management of Richard Ordynski, who directed the performance. The music was arranged and composed by William Furst; the costumes were designed by W. Pogany. The play was presented in five acts and eight scenes, requiring four sets,—namely, a Street in Windsor, a Room in the Garter Inn, a Room in *Ford's* House, and Herne's Oak in Windsor Forest. The street scene was, for practical purposes, foolishly designed and badly constructed. On one side stood the dwelling of *Master Page*; on the other that of *Dr. Caius*. A small brook extended from the footlights to the back drop, being spanned, near the back of the stage, by a steep, arched, absurdly impracticable bridge, across which, to and fro, the actors were obliged to move, and upon which much of the action passed. The open spaces, right and left, before the houses of *Page* and *Caius*, for the actors to move in, were only about seven feet square: any active person could easily have stepped across the stream, but no one did so; all went up and down by way of the bridge. *Dr. Caius*, instead of entering the room of the house in which he lodges (Act I., sc. 4, of the original), came over this bridge, and sent *Mistress Quickly* into the



house to fetch his "green box." *Fenton* appeared on it, where he would have been conspicuous to all neighboring Windsor, and called for *Anne Page*, who, instead of coming out of the door of her father's house, which stood open and through which *Fenton* must first have seen her, appeared at a window, between the door and the footlights, and thence conversed with him, before emerging. *Evans*, that sturdy, sensible, formidable, eccentric, comic person, instead of going to "a Field near Frogmore," stationed himself on the bridge, to wait the coming of *Dr. Caius*, and that peppery Frenchman, who, like his antagonist, is misdirected by the *Host*, instead of seeking him in "a Field near Windsor," also presently appeared on this incommodious and ridiculous structure. The room in *Ford's* house was moderately spacious, and as a stage setting was acceptable; that of the Garter Inn was a sort of stone grotto, of hideous yellows and heavy shadows. The last scene, that at Windsor Forest, was a huge, round mound, about ten or twelve feet high, occupying practically the whole stage. On top of that mound was set the representation of Herne's Oak, an umbrageous fabric which branched over the whole scene; yet the grass shown as growing beneath its dense, overhanging boughs was brilliantly green and thick and lush, as though carefully cultivated every day. Many white

birch trees, with trunks about as thick as a man's thigh, rose all round the edges of the mound, flourishing miraculously in the consuming shade of the mighty oak. The boughs and leaves of this tree, in color a kind of purple, were "carried off," right and left, by means of "border drops." Over the shoulder of the hillock, to the right (facing it), a glimmering surface of water could be discerned, on which there was a ripple of eccentric moonlight, colored like the nasturtium flower. The actors were compelled to clamber about on this mound and they appeared to be in imminent danger of pitching upon their faces and rolling down into the orchestra pit. The site of Herne's Oak, in Windsor Park, by the way, is on a plain; the remnant of the tree is now enclosed with an iron ring fence.

Some of the dresses were rich and handsome, those of the *Merry Wives* and of *Master Page* being the most pleasing. The lighting of the stage was, in many respects, unsatisfactory. When the players came forward to a spot within about four feet of the footlights their faces were in shadow: this style of lighting accords with what is called the "modern" or "progressive" method: it is, in fact, a mere reversion to the defective method prevalent in the time of Edmund Kean, when the "floats" were so placed that only certain parts of the stage were clearly illuminated, and an actor who wished to cause due effect

was obliged to project himself into "the focus." One fact which all actors and stage managers should scrupulously heed is that (with the few exceptions allowed, which prove the rule) *the face must be seen* in order that right and full effect can be obtained. Unless the face of the actor can be plainly seen all expression is sacrificed. On the stage the first appeal is always to the eye—and the eye of the actor (the eye dominating all expression) must be seen in order that the appeal may have its due effect. Another fact which "producers" and scene designers should always recognize is that scenery, properties, lights, etc., should invariably be subservient to the actor.

At the end of this representation of "The Merry Wives" the "fairies" of *Parson Hugh* appeared, provided with sprigs and sprays of flowers and leaves made of, apparently, the waxy or celluloid-like substance which I remember to have seen for the first time in Granville Barker's preposterous "fairy ring" in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." After the curtain had fallen on the end of the play *Falstaff* came before it and spoke part of the Epilogue devised by Augustin Daly. Then the curtain was raised and the characters and the "fairies" were revealed, arranged in a solid group before the mound, waving artificial flowers.

The performance was, in general, commonplace and exceedingly boisterous—a spectacle "full of



sound and fury, signifying nothing." The part of *Mistress Ford*, while easily within the scope of her technical capacity, is discordant with the natural bent of Miss Allen's talents. She possesses more of the sense than of the faculty of humor, being apt and rich in the enjoyment of it; but there is nothing in the part which particularly enlists her sympathy. The defect of her performance, accordingly, was artifice, manifested in strenuous effort, which professional skill could not entirely conceal. Miss Allen possesses, however, resources of demure mischief and arch raillery, and her personation was thoroughly adequate,—attractive by reason of winning personality and innate refinement (perceptible even in her doing of necessarily coarse things) and effective by reason of unflagging, if a little forced, vitality, merriment, and simulation of enjoyment, in circumstances which, for this actress, must have made such simulation indeed difficult. She seemed to have steadily in mind in her plan and its execution the assurance which is spoken by *Mistress Page*,—"Wives may be *honest* and yet *merry*, too!" It is not, however, in such rough and often indelicate parts as those of either of the *Merry Wives*, but in characters of high and of domestic comedy, in the expression of simple, frank, healthful sentiment and pure, vigorous passion that Viola Allen is at her best. She is an actress of fine natural

faculty, great experience, and careful training. She has, alone and unassisted, done far more simple, honest service to the cause of legitimate Drama in America than has generally been recognized, and her presence in any theatrical production would entitle it to special examination and respect. Why such talented and important players as Miss Allen and Miss Crosman unquestionably are (both being long established, recognized, and successful stars) should have elected to support Thomas A. Wise (or James K. Hackett, as originally planned) in a production of "The Merry Wives of Windsor," since the whole of that play must inevitably revolve round the "tun of man," and since *Mistress Ford* and *Mistress Page*, practically, are mere "feeders" to him, is not readily comprehensible.

Henrietta Crosman is a fine comedian, who has become somewhat hardened and embittered and in whose acting a certain quality of cynicism is perceptible. There is, latterly, in all that she does, fluent from the effect of her experience of life, a tart, sub-acid tone, and at times a tinge of coarseness, which reveals itself in the voice. Such qualities, however, are not altogether a hindrance to the effective presentment of such a part as *Mistress Page*, and Miss Crosman, by reason of native ability and of long continued, careful cultivation, is an actress of a high order, to whom such a part is a matter of mere

routine. She possesses unusual authority (one of the most essential of all qualifications for fine acting) and likewise admirable poise; she is hard, sharp, assertive; there is no faltering, no uncertainty, nothing to cause doubt, solicitude or anxiety; and it is always agreeable to observe an actress who knows exactly what she wishes to do and exactly how to do it, and who does it with invariable precision and definite effect. Aside from mistaken views of dramatic art which she has formulated in print (Miss Crosman happens to be among the disparagers of the school of acting to which she owes all her success), it would be well worth the while of every young actor on our stage to study her methods.

Thomas A. Wise as *Falstaff* gave a competent, commonplace performance, which appeared to delight his auditors and which has been extravagantly lauded. He has been specially commended for acting the part in the spirit of Comedy: that, specifically, is exactly what he did not; he acted it in the spirit of farcical clowning. The essential qualities of Shakespeare's delineation of the character, the atmosphere to be imagined, the reality of the experience portrayed, were wholly lacking. There is a bad picture (bad because of the wholly incorrect quality of the ideal of personality revealed) by Edward Grutzner, called "*Falstaff and his Page*": there is also a widely known



print of a fat man, on a colored lithograph of "Falstaff Beer": those graphic atrocities give a fair idea of the physical investiture of Wise's *Falstaff*. That actor possesses some ability and he has had the advantage of much training: he was born in 1862 and he has been on the stage, chiefly in America, since 1888. He shows slight sense of the value of words,—certainly as they are used by Shakespeare,—and less of the value of time or "pace." His *Falstaff* made much pother, but it amounted to little. No background of experience was suggested; not even a remote suggestion was given that the man depicted had degraded himself from anything higher to a greedy, self-indulgent sensualist, and despite his knowledge and better judgment sunk into abject humiliation: there was no touch of wily sapience anywhere, no hint of self-scorn after his discomfiture. When *Sir John* enters, with his "belly full of ford," he is in a state of mind and body as painful, short of tragic desperation, as a sensible man could well experience: yet he is irresistibly comic. There is a world of humorous self-contempt in his speech, "Well, if ever I be served such another trick, I'll have my brains ta'en out and buttered and give them to a dog for a New Year's gift!" (Is there, anywhere, any man but *Falstaff* who could possibly have expressed himself in those words!) He calls for sack, and with it he

seeks to dilute the Thames water he has swallowed. The action of this player, at that point, is typical of all that he did, and likewise of the distinction which exists between the methods of the superior histrionic beings of this halycon time and those of the much disparaged "Old School." Instead of the "quart" of sack, for which *Falstaff* calls, and for the consumption of which he, or any other man, would require more than a moment, a huge pitcher-like vessel, that would have contained about two gallons of fluid, was brought to him. This he seized, applied to his lips, tilted up and, affecting to gulp down the whole contents,—beginning as though the vessel were brimful and continuing till the bottom of the pot was turned toward the ceiling,—wiggled his body as if to signify both suction and enjoyment, while the orchestra made "comic descriptive" music, mimicking the sound of guttural gurgles and gulps! That is "modern comedy" of a kind frequently seen. Anybody who supposes that such actors as James H. Hackett, "Ben" De Bar, and Charles Fisher—representative types of the "Old School"—would have stooped to such expedients of common clowning, or could have been induced to do so, in acting *Falstaff* or any other well drawn, authentic *character*, has much to learn about the history of acting and actors. Wise came nearest to resembling *Falstaff* in his interview with *Mistress*

*Quickly*, when she first comes to him, from *Mistress Ford*.

Among the minor performances in this revival those of *Mistress Quickly* by Miss Annie Hughes and *Master Page* by Fuller Mellish were notably good; the rest were entirely bad. *Dr. Caius*, played by Robert Payton Gibbs, having received from *Mistress Quickly* the "green box" for which he had sent her, hurled it away, over the bridge side, so that it struck the back drop, and then he rushed from the stage without even a glance after his property. *Evans* was colorless and insignificant: *Parson Hugh* is not a coward: of very truth "the parson is no jester"; he is a pleasant-natured, sturdy, eccentric Welshman; he "keeps his day," and, unhindered, he and *Master Doctor Caius* would do more than "hack our English." Mellish, as *Page*, was easy, natural, agreeable,—a finished actor, intelligently and properly attending to his business, in a slight part, and seeming rather puzzled by the association in which he found himself. Miss Hughes presented a buxom, thriving, rather handsome *Mistress Quickly*, glib in speech, avaricious, foolish yet shrewd, delivering the language with exceptional and delightful perception of the meaning and value of every word, and so presenting a clear, consistent, tenable ideal; fluent and precise in execution, discreet, various, and genuinely comic in effect.



## VII.

### ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

*"See, how the lovers sit in state together,  
As they were giving laws to half mankind!  
The impression of a smile, left in her face,  
Shows she died pleased with him for whom she lived,  
And went to charm him in another world.*

*. . . Sleep, blest pair,  
Secure from human chance, long ages out,  
While all the storms of fate fly o'er your tomb:  
And Fame to late posterity shall tell  
No lovers lived so great or died so well."*

—DRYDEN.

#### HISTORICAL COMMENT.

"ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA," which contains 3,964 lines, is the longest of Shakespeare's dramas and, poetically and in a literary sense, one of the best of his works, while considered as a play it is defective because of excess of material and diffuseness of treatment. It is based on the story of the life of Marcus Antonius (83?-30 B. C.), as told by Plutarch, and as known to the dramatist from his reading of North's translation (from the French of Amyot) of Plutarch's

"Lives." It was first published in the Folio of 1623. Authoritative Shakespeare scholars, Dyce, Halliwell-Phillipps, Fleay, White, Hudson, and Rolfe among others, believe it to have been written in 1607 or early in 1608, and first produced in the latter year, but no evidence has been adduced that conclusively shows either when it was written or when it was first acted.

An entry in the Stationers' Register, May 20, 1608, of "a book called Antony and Cleopatra" is believed by Dyce and some other authoritative Shakespeare editors to refer to Shakespeare's play, and from that record the inference is drawn that the play was written shortly before that date. As to the order in which the Roman plays of Shakespeare were composed, most of the editors agree that "Julius Cæsar" was written in 1607, "Antony and Cleopatra" in 1608, and "Coriolanus" in 1610. The complete maturity which characterizes those plays and the vigor and splendor of their style indicate that Shakespeare wrote them when his powers were fully developed and at their height. "Antony and Cleopatra" was first published in the Folio of 1623. "The text is, upon the whole, remarkably accurate," says Knight. Only two earlier plays on the subject are known to exist, namely, the "Cleopatra" of Samuel Daniel, published in 1594, and the "Antonie" of Mary Herbert,

Countess of Pembroke, published in 1595,—the latter translated from the French of Robert Garnier,—to neither of which was Shakespeare in any way indebted: indeed, he followed North's Plutarch so closely that he adopted its errors as well as its facts. Mention should, perhaps, incidentally, be made of another old English play on this subject, a little later than Shakespeare's, the "Cleopatra" of Thomas May, 1626.

"Antony and Cleopatra," it is reasonable to assume, was first presented at the Globe Theatre, and it is probable that *Antony* was acted by Richard Burbage; but in what manner the play was performed and whether the performance prospered or failed we do not know and cannot ascertain. That the dramatist foresaw the spoliation of his *Cleopatra* is inferable from the reference to the subject which he causes the *Queen* to make (Act V., sc. 2): "I shall see some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness." From the time when, probably, this play was first presented (1608) till about the middle of the eighteenth century, a period of 150 years, it dwells in darkness. Other English plays on the subject were written,—the "Antony and Cleopatra" of Sir Charles Sedley (1639-1701), produced at Dorset Garden, in 1677, and Dryden's "All for Love," produced at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, in 1678; but neither of those dramas



borrowed anything from Shakespeare, though the latter was, avowedly, written in imitation of him. A later dramatist, Henry Brooke (1706-1783), made a play on the subject, borrowing largely from Shakespeare, and altering what he borrowed, but that superfluous composition, though published (1788), was never acted.

#### GARRICK'S VERSION.

It was not till Garrick's time that Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra" emerged from seeming oblivion, and even then it reappeared in an altered form. Garrick produced this alteration, made by Edward Capell and himself, January 3, 1759, at Drury Lane, and acted *Antony*, with Mrs. Yates as *Cleopatra*. The original was considerably abridged; some of the thirty-four characters were omitted and some portions of the text were transposed. The beautiful description of *Cleopatra* in her barge, on the river Cydnus, was taken from *Enobarbus* and assigned to *Thyreus*, a minor character, whose name, in the Folio, is *Thidias*. This change of name was arbitrarily made by Theobald, in his edition of Shakespeare, and subsequent editors have sanctioned it. Garrick's assignment of the speech which he took from *Enobarbus* and gave to *Thyreus* was made, probably, because *Thyreus* had been cast to one of his special favorites,



*From a Photograph by Whittle*

*Author's Collection*

HENRIETTA CROSMAN

as

MISTRESS PAGE

THOMAS A. WISE

as

FAUST AFF

VIOLA ALLEN

as

MISTRESS FORD





Charles Holland, a serious actor of much talent, while *Enobarbus* was allotted to Berry, apparently a minor comedian. *Octavius* was played by Fleetwood; *Canidius* by Tate Wilkinson; *Eros* by Davies; *Octavia* by Mrs. Glen; *Charmian* by Miss Hippisley. Davies says that on one occasion Mossop acted *Enobarbus* and "wanted humor"—which is likely enough, since he was one of the most tragical of tragedians. This alteration of Shakespeare's play seems to have been devised as a frame for a spectacle. Garrick presented it with rich scenic embellishment and gave more than the usual attention to correctness of costume. As a rule that great actor paid no heed whatever (nor did any other actor of that period, with here and there an exception) to accuracy of dressing. In this instance he seems to have been more heedful in the matter of raiment, for he dressed the players in Roman garments, except that the necks of his Romans were clothed with black stocks, according to long-established stage custom, discontinued, however, toward the end of the eighteenth century. He did not himself look formidable in Roman costume, because his figure, though remarkably symmetrical, was slight, and he disliked Roman attire, for that reason. He was tolerated as *Antony*, because he was the reigning favorite, but he was not admired in the part. His professional coadjutor, on that

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occasion, Mrs. Yates, then twenty-eight years old, gained no considerable fame as *Cleopatra*, though later, 1766, acting the Egyptian siren, in Dryden's "All for Love," she gave what was accounted a splendid performance: "her haughty features and powerful voice carried her well through rage and disdain." Garrick's revival of "Antony and Cleopatra" was evanescent. One recorder states that the play was acted "with considerable applause"; another mentions that it was acted six times.

### JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE'S PRODUCTION.

After slumbering for another half century, Shakespeare's tragedy was again awakened,—at least, in part,—by John Philip Kemble, who, on November 15, 1813, presented, at Covent Garden, an intermixture of "Antony and Cleopatra" and "All for Love." The blending of Dryden's verse with that of Shakespeare was accomplished with some skill, but the total effect was not agreeable. Dryden's style and likewise his ideals,—particularly of the two great characters,—are inferior to those of Shakespeare, and such incongruous constituents cannot be really mingled, though thrown together. The performance, which was given nine times, was terminated with an imposing Funeral Procession and the singing of a

Dirge, a proceeding which appears to have been entirely appropriate. The cast included Charles Mayne Young as *Antony*, Daniel Terry as *Ventidius*, William Abbott as *Octavius*, Daniel Egerton as *Enobarbus*, William Barrymore as *Lepidus*, Stephen Hamerton as *Dolabella*, William Murray as *Thyreus*, Mrs. Harriet Faucit as *Cleopatra*, Mrs. MacGibbon as *Octavia*, and Miss Cook as *Charmian*.

#### MRS. SIDDONS AS CLEOPATRA.

Mrs. Siddons, many years earlier, had declined to act Shakespeare's *Cleopatra*, saying that she should hate herself if she acted it in the way in which she believed it ought to be acted. Kemble had all along wished to revive the tragedy, and he made an acting version of it, which was never produced: it is minutely described and warmly commended by Furness, who had examined the manuscript. Kemble succeeded in persuading his imperial sister to impersonate the fascinating Egyptian, in "All for Love," and she once—but only once—played that voluptuous heroine, in association with him as *Antony*,—May 5, 1788, at Drury Lane. Her biographer, Boaden, who saw the performance, says that while she "showed the daring atrocity of crime, the notion of frailty was virtually banished," and that her excellence was nearly as



much lost in Dryden's *Cleopatra* as in Shakespeare's *Katharine*,—meaning the *Shrew*. Campbell, also her biographer, records that “she never established ‘the siren of the Nile’ among her popular characters,” and he ventures the opinion that Shakespeare's *Cleopatra* would not have suited her powers: “The energy of the heroine,” he says, “though neither vulgar nor comic, has a meteoric playfulness and a subtle lubricity in the transition of feelings that accords with no impression which can be recollected from Mrs. Siddons’ acting.”

The great actress and both those ardent chroniclers of her greatness appear to have viewed *Cleopatra*, whether Shakespeare's or Dryden's, as, exclusively, a compound of voluptuous wanton and tempestuous termagant. That is a commonly accepted view of the historical person, and it seems warranted, to some extent, by Plutarch's description of her; but there is a difference between *Cleopatra* as drawn by Plutarch and as drawn by Shakespeare. The historian depicts a creature of fact: the dramatist, being also a poet, depicts a creature of the imagination. A woman is not culpable because she happens to possess puissant personal charms. In that respect she is simply a beautiful natural fact, like the rose or the lily. This operation of her charms proceeds without her volition. She cannot help being beautiful or becoming dominant

because of her beauty. As long as she does no wrong she remains innocent and should be exempt from censure. Exceptional women have existed, and such women still exist, possessed of surpassing loveliness and prodigious power of character. Shakespeare, it seems to me, endeavored to depict such a woman in his portrayal of *Cleopatra*. He did not try to reproduce her exactly as, in Plutarch's narrative, she is represented to have been. His *Cleopatra* is an ideal woman, and he has bestowed upon her an excess of fascinating attributes.

#### DRYDEN'S "ALL FOR LOVE."

So many famous players of the past have acted in Dryden's play,—and not in Shakespeare's,—that a few words about it are essential here, to complete the record. Dryden's "All for Love" was first produced in 1678, at Drury Lane, and on the British Stage his play has been more popular than Shakespeare's. At intervals between 1678 and 1818 fourteen productions of it were effected in London, at different theatres, and in each instance the leading parts were assumed by players of distinguished ability and rank. The first performer of Dryden's *Antony* was Hart. Later the part was acted, successively, by Betterton, Booth, Milward, Delane, Barry, Powell, Smith, Kemble, and

Holman; while *Cleopatra* was acted by Mrs. Boutell, Elizabeth Barry, Anne Oldfield, Mrs. Butler, Mrs. Horton, Margaret Woffington, Mrs. Yates, Miss Young, Mrs. Hartley, Mrs. Crawford, Mrs. Siddons, and Ann Brunton. In construction Dryden's play is far more regular than Shakespeare's. The unities are strictly preserved. The action passes in Alexandria. There are required five sets of scenery, one for each of the five acts. The speaking parts are only ten in number; two children and two servants are introduced. In Shakespeare's tragedy there are thirty-two speaking parts and there are many officers, soldiers, and miscellaneous attendants, while the action passes in several different portions of the Roman Empire, compelling forty changes of scene if the play is presented in strict accordance with the original text. The latest recorded performance of Dryden's play, in London, occurred at the Haymarket Theatre, June 13, 1838. Dr. Johnson says, of this tragedy: "It has one fault equal to many, though rather moral than critical, that, by admitting the omnipotence of love, he [Dryden] has recommended as laudable and worthy of imitation that conduct which, through all ages, the good have censured as vicious and the bad despised as foolish."



## THE CONSTITUENTS OF SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY.

Whatever else may be said of the drift of the tragedy of "Antony and Cleopatra," this certainly may with truth be said: that to strong natures that sicken under the weight of convention and are weary with looking upon the littleness of human nature in its ordinary forms, it affords a great and splendid, however temporary, relief and refreshment. The winds of power blow through it; the strong meridian sunshine blazes over it; the colors of morning burn around it; and its fragrance is the scent of a wilderness of roses. Shakespeare's vast imagination was here loosed upon colossal images and imperial splendors. The passions that clash or mingle in this drama are like the ocean surges,—fierce, glittering, terrible, glorious. The theme is the ruin of a demigod. The adjuncts are empires. Wealth of every sort is poured forth with regal and limitless profusion. The language glows with a prodigal emotion and towers to a superb height of eloquence. It does not signify, as modifying the effect of all this tumult and glory, that the stern truth of mortal evanescence is suggested all the way and simply disclosed at last in a tragical wreck of honor, love, and life. While the pageant endures it endures in diamond light, and when it

fades and crumbles the change is instantaneous to darkness and death.

"The odds is gone,  
And there is nothing left remarkable  
Beneath the visiting moon."

There is no need to inquire whether Shakespeare has been true to the historical fact. His characters declare themselves with absolute precision, and they are not to be mistaken. *Antony* and *Cleopatra* are in middle life, and the only possible or admissible ideal of them is that which separates them at once and forever from the gentle, puny, experimental emotions of youth, and invests them with the developed powers and fearless and exultant passions of men and women to whom the world and life are a fact and not a dream. They do not palter. For them there is but one hour, which is the present, and one life, which they will entirely and absolutely fulfil. They have passed out of the mere instinctive life of the senses into that more intense and thrilling life wherein the senses are fed and governed by the imagination. Shakespeare has filled this wonderful play with lines that tell unerringly his grand meaning in this respect,—lines that, to Shakespeare scholars, are in the alphabet of memory:

"There's beggary in the love that can be reckoned."

. . . . .

"There's not a minute of our lives should stretch  
Without some pleasure now."

. . . . .

"Let Rome in Tiber melt and the wide arch  
Of the ranged empire fall! Here is my space!"

. . . . .

"O, thou day of the world,  
Chain mine armed neck! Leap thou, attire and all,  
Through proof of harness, to my heart and there  
Ride on the pants triumphant."

. . . . .

"Fall not a tear, I say! one of them rates  
All that is won and lost. Give me a kiss;  
Even this repays me."

Here is no *Orsino*, sighing for the music that is the food of love; no *Romeo*, taking the measure of an unmade grave; no *Hamlet* lover, bidding his mistress go to a nunnery. You may indeed, if you possess the subtle, poetic sense, hear, through this voluptuous story, the faint, far-off rustle of the garments of the coming Nemesis; the low moan of the funeral music that will sing those imperial lovers to their rest—for nothing is more inevitably doomed than mortal delight in mortal love, and no moralist ever taught his lesson of truth with more inexorable purpose than Shakespeare uses here. But in the meantime it is the present vitality and not the moral implication of the



subject that actors must be concerned to show, and observers to recognize and comprehend, upon the stage, if this tragedy is to be rightly acted and rightly seen. *Antony* and *Cleopatra* are lovers, but not lovers only. It is the splendid stature and infinite variety of character in them that render them puissant in fascination. Each of them speaks great thoughts in great language. Each displays noble imagination. Each becomes majestic in the hour of danger and pathetically heroic in the hour of death. The dying speeches of *Antony* are in the highest vein that Shakespeare ever reached; and, when you consider what is implied as well as what is said, there is nowhere in him a more lofty line than *Cleopatra's*

"Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have  
Immortal longings in me!"

*Antony* at the last is a ruin, and like a ruin,—dark, weird, grim, lonely, haggard,—he seems to stand beneath a cold and lurid sunset sky, wherein the black clouds gather, while the rising wind blows merciless and terrible over an intervening waste of rock and desert. Those images indicate the spirit and atmosphere of Shakespeare's conception.

The charm of the actual *Cleopatra* was not exclusively physical. On that point the testimony of the historian is explicit:

“For her actual beauty, it is said, was not in itself so remarkable that none could be compared with her, or that none could be seen without being struck by it, but the contact of her presence, if you lived with her, was irresistible. The attraction of her person, going with the charm of her conversation and the character that attended all she said or did, was something bewitching. It was a pleasure merely to hear the sound of her voice, with which, like an instrument of many strings, she could pass from one language to another.”

Shakespeare's portrayal of this extraordinary woman, while making her beautiful, does not neglect to invest her with the “infinite variety” which the biographer thus indicates. Cleopatra was thirty-nine years old when she met Antony, who was fifty-six.

There is a passage in Plutarch's narrative of the sea-fight between the forces of Antony and Octavius, an occurrence duly utilized by Shakespeare in his play (Act IV., sc. 10), that glances not only at the utter misery which overwhelmed Antony because of his abject subservience to the fatal passion of love, but at the desolate anguish which befalls ardent human beings whose feelings are not governed by either the dictates of reason or the power of will:

“The fortune of the day was still undecided and the battle equal when, on a sudden, Cleopatra's sixty ships were seen hoisting sail and making out to sea, in full flight. . . . Here it was that Antony showed to all the world that he was no longer actuated by the thoughts and motives of a commander

or a man, or indeed by his own judgment at all, and what was once said as a jest,—that the soul of a lover lives in some one else's body,—he proved to be a serious truth; for, as if he had been born part of her and must move with her wheresoever she went, as soon as he saw her ship sailing away, he abandoned all that were fighting and spending their lives for him, and put himself aboard a galley . . . to follow her that had so well begun his ruin and would hereafter accomplish it. She, perceiving him to follow, gave the signal to come aboard; so, as soon as he came up with them, he was taken into the ship; but without seeing her or letting himself be seen by her he went forward by himself and sat alone, without a word, in the ship's prow, covering his face with his two hands . . . and thus he remained for three days, either in anger with Cleopatra, or wishing not to upbraid her."

It has been well said that "man was made for nobler uses than to be woman's slave." We cannot, with resultant happiness, yield to idolatry. There is a world of meaning in Byron's mournful phrase "the fatal gift of beauty." In association with every object that is supremely lovely and every feeling that is supremely rapturous there is a tone of sadness and of ominous presentiment. The more beautiful the object the keener and sadder is our perception of its transience. The deeper the feeling and the more absorbing the ecstasy the more afflicting is the inevitable sequence of disaster. Conquest of the passions is the highest heroism. That way lies moral grandeur; that way lies success. But the failures of life also



teach, and it is in their treatment of those failures that great poets have most deeply touched the human heart. Thoughtful readers can discern, in the story of *Antony and Cleopatra*, as Shakespeare has told it, something representative of typical human experience, something pictorial of human misery and ruin, and something therefore which elevates the soul by inspiring pity and terror, while, also, it impresses the moral sense with a stern, imperative monition.

#### VARIOUS LATER REVIVALS.—BRITISH STAGE.

Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra" was hastily presented at Covent Garden, November 21, 1833, by Alfred Bunn, and Macready, then under contract to that manager, was compelled, much against his will, to appear as *Antony*. He records, in his "Diary," that the play was "mounted with very inappropriate scenery, though beautifully painted by Clarkson Stanfield," and upon himself he remarks: "I acted as well as I could. . . . was raw, efforty, and uncertain in the scenes of passion, but had just taken precaution enough to make my pauses, although not to make use of them. It was an hasty, unprepared, unfinished performance." Louisa Anne Phillips was the *Cleopatra*. Macready had once before acted *Antony*, April 9, 1813, at Newcastle, but, as he records, "with

little effect," adding the comment, "for *Antony*, the voluptuary and doting spoilt child of Fortune, was not within the compass of a tyro, as I then was." He was twenty at that time. The part was not retained in his repertory.

Phelps produced "*Antony and Cleopatra*," October 22, 1849, at Sadler's Wells, using the original text, and giving scrupulous attention to scenery and costume. The Egyptian scenes were hailed as admirable. Phelps played *Antony*, and according to F. G. Tomlins, generally a censorious critic, most ably depicted the struggle between an enthralling passion and a sense of departing honor and glory. The cast comprised G. K. Dickinson as *Octavius Cæsar*, Henry Marston as *Sextus Pompeius*, George Bennett as *Enobarbus*, Mr. Scholey as *Ventidius*, Isabella Glyn as *Cleopatra*, Miss Aldridge as *Octavia*, and Miss T. Bassano as *Charmian*. Miss Glyn, acting *Cleopatra* for the first time, gave a powerful and affecting performance, which elicited much critical commendation. The variety, caprice, grace, pride, dignity, and fascination of the character were said to have been fully exhibited. "Indignant majesty, compulsory resignation, heroic resolve, and tender memory were all adequately pronounced" ("*Athenæum*"). Another observer wrote that she "imparted singular grace, animation, warmth, and earnestness to her perform-

ance" and was throughout "skilful and effective": "In the earlier portions of the play she was the gay-hearted, hero-conquering, and subduing queen; while in the latter scenes the fall of pride and beauty, in combination with the work of grief, was portrayed with great power and pathos." John Coleman, who acted with her in several plays, including "Antony and Cleopatra,"—in which he performed *Antony*,—in Newcastle, about 1854, said of her: "Accurately parroted in the archaistic methods of Mrs. Siddons [Miss Glyn was a pupil of Charles Kemble], many of Isabella's performances were intelligent, picturesque, and even striking. I have not seen a better *Lady Macbeth* nor so good a *Cleopatra* or *Hermione*. . . . 'Antony and Cleopatra' was got up [at Newcastle] on a scale of great splendor." The nature of that splendor is not specified: if accurate "parroting" in an "archaistic" method produces the best performances of such exacting parts as *Lady Macbeth*, *Cleopatra*, and *Hermione* as were witnessed by a widely experienced manager in close to fifty years' observance of the Theatre, it is a pity we cannot have more of it!

A version of Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra" made by Andrew Halliday (1830-1873) was produced, September 20, 1873, at Drury Lane, with James R. Anderson (1810-1895) as *Antony* and Ellen Wallis as *Cleopatra*. This version was in four acts,



the text of the original being much reduced. Henry Sinclair played *Octavius* and John Ryder *Enobarbus*. Miss Wallis subsequently acted in the provinces in an abbreviated version, arranged by herself. Frank Clements was then the *Antony*. The Drury Lane revival of 1873 was made by Frederick Balsir Chatterton (1835-1886), and it was the financial failure of his production which caused him to declare that "Shakespeare spells Ruin and Byron Bankruptcy,"—a foolish, ignorant plaint that has, first and last, done substantial harm to the legitimate Theatre. (The authorship of this stupid statement has been attributed, by Clement Scott, to Charles Lamb Kenney; and, by various other writers, to Dion Boucicault. I believe, however, that it was original with the disappointed Chatterton: he had produced Byron's "Manfred" August 16, 1873. John Coleman asserts that Samuel Phelps quarrelled with Chatterton "in consequence of the latter having adopted the responsibility of Mr. Boucicault's cynical apothegm," and that, subsequently, Phelps, having been crowded out of Drury Lane to make room for production there, by Chatterton, of Boucicault's "Formosa," played a successful engagement at Sadler's Wells,—the management of which theatre he had, however, some time earlier resigned,—at the end of which he made a speech to the audience, saying, "These crowded houses are the best

answer to *Boucicault's* insolent and mendacious epigram,—an epigram which is an impudent advertising gag, worthy of a quack at a country fair." Coleman is in many ways a heedless historian: whoever was fool enough to make the remark, it has, in practical experience, been often proved untrue.—For an examination of the subject see the first chapter of the First Series of this work.)

At least four other revivals of "Antony and Cleopatra" have since then been made on the London Stage. It was brought out there, November 18, 1890, at the Princess Theatre,—Mrs. Langtry assuming *Cleopatra*, with Charles Coghlan as *Antony*. On May 24, 1897, Louis Calvert and Miss Janet Achurch acted in it, at the Olympic Theatre. On March 29, 1900, F. R. Benson and Mrs. Benson performed in it at the Lyceum; and on December 27, 1906, Herbert Beerbohm-Tree revived it at His Majesty's. Charles Calvert also produced it, in 1865, at the Prince's Theatre, Manchester, acting *Antony*; and subsequently a company under his management played it in the provinces, Walter Montgomery assuming *Antony* and Miss Reinhardt *Cleopatra*. Of Calvert's production "Tom" Taylor wrote:

"I but record my unexaggerated conviction when I say that in judgment, liberality, and good taste, apart from the signal

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merit of the performance of the principal parts, this revival seems to me quite deserving *to rank with the best of those of Macready or Charles Kean.*"

Charles Calvert was not only a liberal and astute manager but an accomplished and versatile actor, and he gave a fine performance of *Antony*. One observer of it wrote: "The first sentence he utters rivets attention, there seems such depth of feeling and such quiet earnestness in his manner; and, as the tragedy unfolds itself, the spectator easily forgets that he is present at a mimic representation and imagines himself the witness of some dreadful reality." Another declared:

"The *Antony* of Calvert is a study. There is a delirium of passion—a recklessness in love and death—that makes an audience thrill with its magic power. From the downfall of *Antony* to his death Mr. Calvert presents a picture which, displaying his settled despair, his deep humiliation, and yet his love for *Cleopatra*, strong even in death, is beautiful and most poetic in conception and execution. The chill and silence which creep over the audience are the best testimony to its power."

The Langtry-Coghlan presentation was important only as a spectacle. Coghlan's performance was warmly commended by some of his admirers, but it is difficult to believe, remembering his temperament, quality, physique, and style, that he could suitably have impersonated *Antony*. He did not long play



the part. Mrs. Langtry, however, travelling in the British provinces, continued to act in the tragedy, Frank Worthing (1866-1910) being the *Antony*. The production at the Princess' was made by the Hon. Lewis Wingfield, and the dressing and scenery were considered lavishly opulent: scenes of exceptional splendor were "The Triumphal Reception of *Antony* by *Cleopatra*," "A Hall in *Cleopatra's* Palace," and "The Interior of an Egyptian Monument." Frank Kemble Cooper played *Octavius* and made a "hit" in it; Arthur Stirling was the *Enobarbus*. Mrs. Langtry must have been a vision of incongruous beauty as the royal Egyptian, but no more like the character than an icicle is like a skyrocket.

Benson's production was effected with the taste, care, and attention to essential and rightful effect which have all along been characteristic of his management. The revival was made as one of a series of subscription performances. Neither Benson nor his wife appeared well suited to the leading characters, and the general performance did not rise above the level of earnest, respectable mediocrity. The scene on *Pompey's* galley was retained. The text throughout was but little curtailed. Oscar Ashe was the *Pompey*, Lyall Swete the *Enobarbus*.

Tree's revival of the tragedy was remarkable chiefly as a spectacle. "The scenes in 'Cæsar's House' are

cut very short indeed . . . the 'camp' scenes become mere kinematographs." The lines (Act III., sc. 7) describing *Antony's* return to Alexandria were made by Tree the basis of "a silent and yet extraordinarily eloquent tableau." "The Athenæum" declared that "for the first time, so far as records extend, 'Antony and Cleopatra' has been set upon the stage in a manner worthy of the place it occupies in the Shakespearean drama,"—which certainly is not a correct statement—and a writer in "The Daily Telegraph" said:

"Never, probably, in his career has Mr. Tree given us a more perfect stage adornment than that which he displays in 'Antony and Cleopatra.' The gradation of colors, the delicate shades of violet, and puce, and purple, the glittering robes of the *Queen*, the pomp and ceremony of her court,—all these things, controlled by the practised artistry of Mr. Percy Macquoid [Mr. Macquoid made the scenic designs], add to the pleasure of the eye, and give bodily semblance to the inner meaning of the play. If for nothing else, the production would be extraordinary because of its stage pictures. The first glimpse of the landing stage of *Cleopatra's* palace, with the barge that draws up to the steps, from which issue the regal pair of lovers; the beautiful, gold-bedizened scene, when *Cleopatra* wreaks her vengeance on the messenger telling of *Antony's* betrothal; the magnificent tableau of the return of *Antony* to Alexandria; above all, perhaps, the scene of Pompey's galley, where, in the mysterious dark, lit by the fantastically-colored lamps at the poop, the triumvirs watch the dancing girls, and themselves join in a mad debauch—these

and other pictures prove once more that, whatever else we have succeeded or failed in doing on the modern stage, we have advanced the ordinary scenic artifices to a pitch of success which was not dreamed of by our forefathers."

The "dreams of our forefathers" provide a dubious subject for speculation. The mechanical devices of the Theatre, as of everything else, certainly have been improved: electricity alone is guarantee of that. But, before I can believe that, "taking one consideration with another," such productions as that of "Coriolanus" by Wheatley, and that of "Julius Cæsar" by Edwin Booth,—the latter accomplished on a better equipped stage than exists in America or Great Britain to-day,—have been surpassed, not to say totally eclipsed, in even their mechanical aspects, I shall need to see their superiors! Tree played *Antony*, Constance Collier *Cleopatra*, Basil Gill *Octavius*, Julian L'Estrange *Pompey*, Norman Forbes *Lepidus*, and Lyn Harding *Enobarbus*. Tree made "a fine figure as *Antony*," but in "his voluptuous thrills, even when he is encircled by *Cleopatra's* arms, seemed to lack something of responsive warmth"; and Miss Collier as *Cleopatra*, played "the part splendidly" ("London Times"),—an achievement which must, indeed, have been striking: perhaps since Tree intends to act in New York, in the theatrical season of 1916-'17, he may strike our public into amazement and admiration



by reproduction of this marvellously resplendent revival.

#### AMERICAN STAGE.

The first performance of "Antony and Cleopatra" given in America occurred, April 26, 1846, at the old Park Theatre, New York, then managed by Edmund Simpson. The play was expensively mounted and carefully dressed, and it was acted by a competent company. George Vandenhoff was *Antony*, John Dyott *Octavius*, Humphrey Bland *Enobarbus*, Harriet Bland *Cleopatra*, Fanny Gordon *Charmian*, and Miss Flynn *Iras*. "Hard times" were then prevalent, and this ambitious and costly revival failed. Only six performances were given. Vandenhoff,—tall, handsome, graceful, a fine speaker of blank verse, ardent in temperament, and always a facile and interesting, if not an inspiring, histrionic artist,—was well equipped for the acting of *Antony*. I never saw him play the part, but I saw him play several others, among them *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Wolsey*, and I am sure that he played *Antony* well. Harriet Bland, the elder sister of Helena Faucit, was esteemed an actress of superior ability, and her performance of *Cleopatra* was commended in the local press.

Edward Eddy (1822-1875) revived this tragedy, investing it with new and rich scenery and dressing



*From a Photograph by Sarony*

*Author's Collection*

KYRLE BELLEW AS MARC ANTONY





the characters in correct costume, March 7, 1859, at the old Broadway Theatre, and acted *Antony*, with Mme. Ponisi as *Cleopatra*, J. B. Howe as *Octavius*, Henry Pearson as *Enobarbus*, Alice Gray as *Octavia*, Mrs. G. C. Germon as *Charmian*, and Ada Clare as *Iras*. The play held the stage for twenty-four nights. The last performance, given April 2, was the last ever given in that once highly popular theatre. Edward Eddy was an actor of the "robustious" order, mentioned by Shakespeare, and could "tear a passion to tatters," but he did not lack genuine dramatic talent. Mme. Ponisi (1810-1899), an English actress, a handsome brunette, was commended as *Cleopatra*, but more for her aspect than her acting. She could, and did, make the fair Egyptian queen an alluring woman, but she lacked the power and charm of an imposing personality.

On April 2, 1877, a revival of the play was creditably accomplished at Niblo's Garden, New York, with Joseph Wheelock, Sr., as *Antony* and Agnes Booth as *Cleopatra*. Fourteen performances were given. On November 26, 1877, Rose Eytinge produced the play in New York at the Broadway Theatre, with Frederick B. Warde as *Antony* and Charles H. Rockwell as *Octavius*, herself acting *Cleopatra*, to which part she was exceptionally well suited, alike in person and temperament.

In the glittering presentment made with Agnes Booth as *Cleopatra* the play was treated as a vehicle of scenic exhibition, almost every consideration being sacrificed to that of pageantry. The scenery was resplendent, the costumes were rich and tasteful, many pleasing pictorial tableaux were shown, and an introduced Ballet, led by graceful dancers, the Menzelli Sisters, gave pleasure alike to the Egyptian *Queen* on the stage and the audience in front of it. One of the pictorial scenes exhibited an impressive panorama of the open sea, and another displayed the voyage of *Pompey's* galley up the River Nile, at night: the transit was, perhaps, a little precipitate, since the galley overtook the moon, which at first had not been visible, and speedily left that languid planet behind; but such is often the way of panoramas. Sets exhibiting the palace of the Ptolemies and a summer abode of the *Queen* were magnificent. The battles by sea and, at Antium, by land were shown in spirited tableaux, and a beautiful picture was presented of "The Coronation" of *Antony* by *Cleopatra*, a ceremony for which Shakespeare had neglected to provide. In the stage version of the play which was then used some of the scenes had been transposed, several of the most important passages had been omitted, and the dialogues had been freely cut. The essential soul, the tragic, terrible experience of defeated ambition,

despoiled grandeur, broken hearts, and ruined lives, had not been considered. A lavish show-piece had been designed, and the design was amply fulfilled. The cast of parts was in no way remarkable. Agnes Booth, handsome, stately, authoritative, a thoroughly experienced and competent actress, was regal in appearance as *Cleopatra*. Wheelock as *Antony* was energetic and correct—and nothing more.

In the production of the tragedy made by Rose Eytinge as *Cleopatra*, as in its immediate predecessor, many pictorial effects of an introduced Ballet, which was led by the slender, supple, and pretty Mlle. Betty Rigl, were nowhere coarse and everywhere pleasing. The scenery was opulent; the costumes of rich texture and brilliant color. The tableau showing *Cleopatra's* barge, on the River Cydnus, was beautiful, but the representative of *Enobarbus*, who gave a low-comedy performance of that fine part,—which is as strong in feeling as it is in humor,—described that gorgeous vessel, with its purple sails, its silver oars, its Cupids and its Nereids, much as a bovine rustic might do, descanting on a new canal boat. Rose Eytinge, a handsome brunette, with brilliant dark eyes, an ample figure, a strong, melodious voice,—her temperament ardent and passionate, her character formidable, her knowledge of all the arts of female coquetry complete, and her comprehension at least of



*Cleopatra's* waywardness, caprice, and fiery temper thorough and exact,—was in many ways conformable to the part and she played it with compelling energy and beguiling grace. No other actress appearing on our Stage, in my remembrance, which covers many years, has given a more acceptable performance of it, and I doubt whether, mechanically, it has been better played on the British Stage by any modern actress, except, perhaps, Isabella Glyn,—whose Reading of “Antony and Cleopatra,” to which I listened with great pleasure (December 22, 1870, at Steinway Hall, New York), was, in many respects, admirable: indeed, Miss Glyn’s treatment of the scene in which *Cleopatra* receives news of *Antony's* marriage to *Octavia* was magnificent. No actress within my observation has shown the greatness of *Cleopatra* in the Death Scene. Rose Eytinge pleased the eye and satisfied the sense of voluptuousness and luxury, without either profoundly stirring the imagination or touching the heart. In San Francisco, when she played *Cleopatra*, Thomas Keene was the *Antony* and Henry Edwards the *Enobarbus*. “Antony and Cleopatra” was played at the Broadway till December 15.

## THE POTTER AND BELLEW REVIVAL.

An ornate production of the tragedy was accomplished, January 8, 1889, at Palmer's Theatre, New York, Kyrle Bellew appearing as *Antony* and Cora Urquhart Potter as *Cleopatra*. The dresses, although composite, miscellaneous, and not distinctly characteristic of any historic time or place, were richly pictorial. Egypt, the scene of the action, had been conquered and overrun by the Greeks, before the time of this play, and there would, therefore, be warrant for the use of mingled Grecian and Egyptian as well as Roman raiment, in the dressing of it. The tragedy, arranged by Bellew, was comprised in six acts and fourteen scenes, and it was presented, with pomp and circumstance, in an expeditious way. Numerous supernumeraries were employed and much use was made of a tableau curtain. The great play was shown, however, not with all its parts judiciously cast and adequately impersonated, but as a spectacle,—the two leading parts being undertaken by experimental triflers,—and chiefly for the purpose of exploiting the beauty of a pretty woman, who possessed social prominence. Thus *Antony* appeared in the person of an effeminate stripling and *Cleopatra* in that of a belle of the modern ballroom.

Kyrle Bellew, indeed, for light comedy and senti-

mental parts, and within a limited range, was a good actor, one of the best of his period; late in life (1908), at the age of sixty-three, he gave the best performance of his career, in a serious vein, acting *Richard Voysin*, in "The Thief"; but Kyrle Bellew masquerading as *Antony* merely made himself ridiculous. Stature, power, authority, solidity, martial distinction, volume of feeling and of voice, the capability of frenzied passion, combative predominance, electrical action, grief-stricken abandonment, and the lonely, desolate grandeur of despair,—all those qualities and faculties, imperatively essential to a true embodiment of *Antony*, were absent from his personality and therefore, necessarily, absent from his performance: without them there can be no Antony. In the Fourth Act of the original play,—that which concerns the victory by land and the ignominious flight by sea,—in the revulsion against *Cleopatra*, and the fatal action sequent on a false report of her death, *Antony* rises in physical passion and in mental desperation to the full height of *Macbeth*, and that height is, from natural causes, unattainable by persons of light, brittle, finical quality, such as Kyrle Bellew, on the stage, certainly seemed. The ideal of *Antony* that he exhibited was no more in accordance with Shakespeare's conception than a flute solo would be with a hurricane.





*From a Photograph by Sarony*

*Author's Collection*

CORA URQUHART POTTER AS CLEOPATRA



Bellew's foolish effort was more than matched by Mrs. Potter's as *Cleopatra*. That trivial performer conveyed no impression of either intellectual capacity, emotional power, or histrionic skill, but assumed the tremendous part of *Cleopatra* as lightly as if it had been *Lydia Languish* or *Lady Sneerwell*. *Cleopatra's* scenes with *Mardian* and the *Messenger* would tax the resources of the most experienced and accomplished actress,—so great is their draft upon the variety of emotion in a woman's nature which is to be comprehended and upon the technical expertness requisite for the dramatic expression of it; yet those are, perhaps, the least difficult of the situations in which *Cleopatra* is involved. The actress made a liberal display of magnificent raiment and, in the closing scene, of her comely person. Much stress was laid on physical beauty, and certainly Mrs. Potter was, at that time, a handsome woman: but handsome women were not, and are not, uncommon,—and to be handsome, even to be seductively beautiful, though advantageous, is not, in itself, qualification to act *Cleopatra*. Mrs. Potter's endeavor was weak and common,—an amplification of the most prolix and tedious form of parlor theatricals. She conspicuously disregarded the facts that *Cleopatra* is a queen and the heroine of a poetic tragedy. Nowhere, even in the earlier parts of the performance, was there even a suggestion of that



rich, languorous, golden and purple atmosphere which should enwreath it, in order to broaden and deepen the tragic gloom, the desolation, the heart-rending pathos of the final catastrophe. As shown and expressed by Bellew and Mrs. Potter, the emotions of *Antony* and *Cleopatra* were in no way more impressive than would be the stridulous loves of a couple of grasshoppers in a cabbage leaf. The players retained the play for a short time in their repertory, presenting it in a few other cities, and then discarded it. Fifty-seven consecutive performances were given at Palmer's—the longest "run," I believe, ever achieved for this tragedy.

#### THE NEW THEATRE REVIVAL.—SOTHERN AND MARLOWE.

The ill-starred New Theatre, New York, was opened, November 8, 1908, with a production of "Antony and Cleopatra," in which Edward Hugh Sothorn appeared as *Antony*, Julia Marlowe as *Cleopatra*, and E. A. Anson as *Octavius*. The revival was made under the stage direction of Louis Calvert, and as to stage management, scenery, and costumes, it was, in the main, a worthy one. The play was arranged in five acts and thirteen scenes. All the Alexandrian scenes were acted in the palace of *Cleopatra*, except the last, in the monument; all the Roman scenes

before the palace of *Octavius*, at Rome. The two sets were spacious and handsome,—especially that made for *Cleopatra's* palace,—with no excess of furniture to impede the actors; with vast, massive pillars and huge curtains, beyond which, when they had been drawn aside,—as during the representation they were,—a broad expanse of variously lighted and shaded water was revealed, with a glimmering view of the distant opposite shore. The play had not been sufficiently shortened for practical use. A preliminary performance,—called a “general rehearsal,” with an invited audience, of which it was my fortune to be one,—was given, November 6, and that lasted longer even than the first public representation. The dramatically significant and highly pictorial scene on the barge of *Pompey* was used at the “rehearsal,” but at the formal opening it was omitted (together with other matter): the set for that scene was a splendid picture and the deletion of it was, of course, an injury to the presentation.

The scenery for this production was painted by Ernest Albert, after drawings by Jules Guérin. In some instances it was beautiful in design and delightful in effect. The chief fault of it was excessive size; it dwarfed the figures of the actors.

Sothorn's personation of *Antony* was intelligent, earnest, and mechanically correct, but he showed him-

self unsuited to the part, physically, temperamentally, and in artistic style. There were a few gusty touches of well simulated passion in his utterance, but, in general, his delivery was tame, colloquial, and monotonous. Much of what he said,—and indeed of all that was said on the stage of the New Theatre,—was more or less indistinct and sometimes inaudible, this being due to combination of bad elocution and defective acoustics. (After the first season that theatre, now, 1916, the Century, was so altered as to improve its acoustic properties.) Sothern as *Antony* was best in the scene with *Eros*, immediately following the news of *Cleopatra's* supposed death, in which there was in his acting some denotement of genuine feeling and a tinge of embittered sense of loss and ruin. But he never suggested “the triple pillar of the world, the demi-Atlas of this earth, the arm and burgonet of men”; his demeanor was often sluggish, never majestic, and in situations requiring pathos merely lugubrious. The total effect was puny.

Julia Marlowe's *Cleopatra* was fair to see and delightful to hear—when any of the speaking was audible. Beauty, charm, sympathetic temperament, and melodious elocution did not, however, redeem a fitful, indefinite embodiment. There was not much of poetry in the assumption and no royalty. It is part of the cant of the times that royal persons are





From a Photograph by White

E. H. SOTHERN AS MARC ANTONY AND JULIA MARLOWE AS CLEOPATRA  
(In "Antony and Cleopatra")

*"I am dying, Egypt, dying;  
Give me some wine, and let me speak a little."*

ACT IV., SC. 15

Author's Collection



like any others—but it is only cant: everything depends on the persons, and it is impossible for me to believe *Cleopatra* is not both queenlike and unique. In this actress's performance she seemed more a wayward girl than anything else, and in the passages of tempestuous rage was merely fractious. Sothern and Marlowe took the New Theatre production of "Antony and Cleopatra" with them when, after a few weeks, they proceeded on a tour of the country, and for a while gave presentments of it; but the public evinced no interest in their exposition of it, and the tragedy was soon, and wisely, discarded from their repertory.



## VIII.

### KING JOHN.

*"An ancient story I'll tell you anon  
Of a notable prince that was called King John,  
And he ruled England with main and with might,  
For he did great wrong and maintained little right."*

—OLD BALLAD.

*"Conscience, anticipating time,  
Already rues the enacted crime,  
And calls her furies forth to shake  
The sounding scourge and hissing snake,  
While her poor victim's outward throes  
Bear witness to his mental woes."*

—SCOTT.

#### ORIGIN, AND DATE OF COMPOSITION.

"KING JOHN" was based by Shakespeare on an earlier play by an unknown author (it has been, conjecturally, attributed to Christopher Marlowe), published in 1591. A second edition of that earlier play, published in 1611, bears on its title page the words "Written by W. Sh." and a third edition of it, published in 1622, bears the name of William Shakespeare as that of the author. "By whom it was really

written," says Dyce, "is a vain inquiry." Leading commentators are agreed that the publication of it as the work of Shakespeare was fraudulent. Shakespeare's "King John" is first mentioned by Meres, in his "Palladis Tamia," 1598, and it is believed to have been written in 1596. It was first published in the Folio of 1623. No information exists as to when, where, or by whom it was first acted. The presumption is that it was originally produced, as soon as written, at either the Globe or the Blackfriars.

## STAGE VERSIONS.

"King John" has not been, comparatively, much mutilated by adaptation. Cibber mangled it in 1745. John Philip Kemble judiciously adapted it, for his own use, and published his version, in 1800 and in 1804. A version considerably and injudiciously altered from the original, by the Rev. Richard Valpy, was performed at Covent Garden, May 20, 1803, George Frederick Cooke appearing in it as *King John*, for the first time. Mrs. Litchfield played *Constance*. This version had been published in 1800. Valpy, who made it for the use of schools, omitted the First Act, and he introduced several passages, some of them written by himself, others selected by him from Colley Cibber's contemptible play of "Papal

Tyranny." It seems strange that Cooke, an idolater of Shakespeare, should have condescended to appear in this distortion.

#### CONSTITUENTS OF THE PLAY.

The dramatic thread of the tragedy is the opposition of *King John* and *Prince Arthur*, in a contest for the crown of England, the title to which is lawfully vested in the *Prince*, while the possession of it is unlawfully vested in the *King*. Behind the *Prince* stands his mother, the passionate, imaginative, picturesque *Constance*, clamorous for his royal birthright, and frantic in dolorous lamentation when that birthright is bartered. Behind the *King* stands the arrogant *Queen-Mother Elinor*, inspiring her son to hold, by the strong hand, that sovereignty to which she knows he is not entitled and cannot otherwise maintain; and behind him also stands the gay, martial, buoyant, truculent, honest, loyal *Falconbridge*, whom no peril can daunt and no obstacle impede. Sometimes in alliance and sometimes in opposition, the scheming, potent *Philip, King of France*, whether as friend or foe, is a continual menace to the English usurper. Behind all,—the spring and impulse of the action,—stands *Cardinal Pandulph*, legate of the Pope, prompting to war or peace, as best befits his political



purpose to augment the Papal power. Viewed even as a fanciful epitome of old English History,—while allowing for its compression of events and its proved errors of alleged fact,—the play is exceptionally luminous and vitally interesting. Viewed as a study of human nature, it is precious for its substance of truth and marvellous for its beauty of expression. Maternal love and grief are nowhere else put into such superlative words as those of *Constance*. The exquisite scene in which *Prince Arthur* pleads and *Hubert* relents is, of its pathetic order, unmatched and unmatchable. The consistent preservation of poetic tone is not less absolute than the sustainment of perfect fidelity to nature and essential fact. *King John*, in reality, was as contemptuous of the “bell, book, and candle” of the Church as *Falconbridge* is, in the play. His surrender to Rome, like his surrender to the Barons when he signed the Great Charter, was an act conceived in policy and performed under compulsion,—for he well knew that what was demanded would soon be extorted if it were not then given. In the tragedy he is shown,—after the death of his formidable mother, and lacking her counsel and support,—to be gradually but surely breaking, beneath the affliction of a haunting doubt and a secret terror. Disasters thicken around him. Omens affright him. The fever that is heavy on him has troubled him for

a long time. His heart is sick. The violent death of *Prince Arthur*, for which he knows himself responsible, is a burden upon his guilty mind. He feels that his friends are falling away. He dreads the power of Rome. He dreads the power of France. Above all things else, he dreads the nameless horror of an inscrutable, retributive Fate. From the moment when *King John* incites and enjoins *Hubert* to murder *Prince Arthur* the atmosphere of the tragedy is tremulous with a shuddering dread of mysterious, impending doom. From that moment the monarch, though he walks in sunlight, is conscious of the ever-darkening shadow.

#### THE CHARACTER OF *KING JOHN*.

The character of *King John*, although not one of the greatest of Shakespeare's creations, is, of all his characters, one of the most difficult of authoritative, enthralling representation,—for the double reason that it is not uniformly and explicitly drawn, and is imbedded in a tumultuous and somewhat distracting profusion of military exploits. The effective impartment of a full ideal of it to a theatrical audience exacts the exercise of a consummate faculty of impersonation and extraordinary skill of embodiment. Almost all of the first half of the play is devoted to

a deployment of the principal persons concerned in it, and to preparation, by means of debate and the clangor of martial combat, for the portrayal of those persons, in a web of movement essentially dramatic; and during that preliminary period the character of the *King* is, in a considerable degree, reserved from full disclosure,—for he appears as an intrepid, resolute, expeditious warrior, not openly exhibiting either malevolence, weakness, or guile. When, therefore, after the capture of *Prince Arthur*, he suddenly reveals himself as a subtle, crafty, treacherous, sinister villain, prompting the perpetration of a dastardly murder, of which he scarcely has the courage to speak, the author's revelation of him in this new light tends to bring with it a sense of discord and to make the character seem anomalous. Formation of a clear, consistent, definite, practical ideal of *King John*, accordingly, requires keen discernment in a comprehensive survey of the tragedy as a whole. The character as represented by history is far from being identical with the character as represented by Shakespeare. The actual man appears to have been a ruffian, and, though possessed of redeeming qualities (such as promptitude of will, inherent authority and sporadic, bulldog courage), hideously cruel, monstrously licentious, a savage tyrant, perfidious, ruthless, intrinsically wicked:—such a man as, being prac-



tically almost a barbarian, could not, if literally drawn, be made interesting in a work of art. The age of King John was one of violence; the chronicles of his reign proceed, for the most part, from monkish writers, unlikely to be tender of the reputation of a prince who defied the Pope of Rome; and, whatever may have been the monarch's vices and crimes, his sovereignty of England lasted for eighteen years, and was terminated not by his deposition, but by his natural death. The purpose of art, in treating of such a person,—whether that art be of drama or romance,—could be served, as it has been in Shakespeare's play of "King John" and in Scott's novel of "Ivanhoe," only through a judicious consideration of those facts, and through the conception of a character not compact of merely monotonous brutality, but commingled of many attributes, susceptible of artistic treatment and of more or less sympathetic exhibition. A savage, occupied in the industry of ordinary crime, is practically useless, whether in a play or a novel. Character, in order that it may be interesting, must be credible and diversified. Shakespeare, in delineating *King John*, has largely ignored the testimony of such records as were accessible to him, and,—closely following as to plot and as to the characteristics of the several prominent persons the earlier play on which he based his tragedy,—has depicted a

man and not a brute. Beneath the magic touch of the poetic dramatist a burly savage is transfigured so that he becomes a creature of imagination; a being capable of inspiring friendship as well as animosity; a being prone to frightful wickedness, but not immune from equally frightful remorse. The historian Macaulay designates King John as a trifler and a coward. Shakespeare depicted him as an incarnation of valor, policy, and depravity;—valor that is defeated by rashness and misfortune; policy that is thwarted by remorse and superstitious fear; and depravity that is punished by the defection of his barons and the protracted tortures of an agonizing death.

The quality of the actual King John can be inferred from what is recorded of his conduct after the barons had compelled him to sign Magna Charta. The chronicle of Holinshed states that:

“he cursed the hour when he was born, the mother that bore him and the paps that gave him suck, wishing that he had received death by violence of sword or knife instead of natural nourishment; whetted his teeth and did bite first one staff and then another as he walked, and oft broke the same into pieces: with such disordered behavior and furious gesture he uttered his grief that the noblemen who were present well perceived the inclination of his inward affections.”

## EARLY REPRESENTATIONS.—BRITISH STAGE.

The stage history of this play is a blank for the period of 141 years immediately following the supposed date of its first presentment. On January 26, 1737, it was revived, at Covent Garden, where it met with public favor, largely because of the excellent acting of Thomas Walker in the part of *Falconbridge* and the impassioned and affecting performance of *Constance* by Mrs. Hallam. On February 2, 1738, at the same theatre, it was again revived, in compliance with the request of certain ladies of high social station who had formed a society for the purpose of fostering the production of Shakespeare's plays. On both occasions the chief features of the cast were identical. Dennis Delane played the *King*, and, according to Davies, who saw the performance, did not play him well: "he could not easily assume the turbulent and gloomy passions of the character." On February 15, 1745, still at Covent Garden, the crude and coarse alteration of Shakespeare's tragedy made by Colley Cibber was produced, under the title of "Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John," and Cibber, who had been for some time absent from the stage, reappeared, acting *Cardinal Pandulph*. Among the associates of the veteran were Quin as *King John*, Ryan as *Falconbridge*, Bridgewater as *Hubert*, Hale



as *King Philip*, Theophilus Cibber as the *Dauphin*, Jane Cibber as *Prince Arthur*, Mrs. Pritchard as *Constance*, and George Anne Bellamy as *Blanche*. Cibber was then seventy-three and had lost some of his teeth, so that he could not speak distinctly. Davies mentions that his words were inarticulate and adds the remark that "his deportment was as disgusting as his utterance: he affected a stately, magnificent tread, a supercilious aspect, with lofty and extravagant action, which he displayed by waving up and down a roll of parchment in his right hand." The play attracted attention for a little while, because of its relevancy to the armed rebellion of the Popish Pretender, James Stuart, then in progress, but it was soon discarded and forgotten. Shakespeare's "King John," however, to which the presentment of it had directed particular attention, was thus recovered from the neglect into which it had fallen, its interest for the audience and the practical value of its characters for the actor were perceived, and, thereafter, for many years, revivals of it on the British Stage were of frequent occurrence.

## QUIN AND MRS. PRITCHARD.

Cibber modestly observed, concerning "King John" and his wretched hash of it, that he "endeavored to

make it more like a play than I found it in Shakespeare." In this superfluous endeavor he preserved something of Shakespeare, and that which he preserved he did not always mar, so that Quin was not wholly prevented from making an impressive display of his art when acting *King John*. In the scene in which the *King* incites *Hubert* to murder *Prince Arthur* (Act III., sc. 3, of the original—retained though altered), Quin's low, distinct whisper of the speech leading to the fatal words, "Death!"—"A grave!" was profoundly effective. That scene, in Shakespeare's play, occurs on "The Plains near Angiers"; in Cibber's it occurs in a room, and the *King* is made to tell *Hubert* to "draw the curtain," so that he may speak to him in the dark. Cibber also makes *Hubert*, in the same scene, exact from the *King* a warrant to do the murder, thus spoiling the full dramatic effect of an otherwise awful and thrilling situation. In Shakespeare's play no mention of the warrant occurs till when, in Act IV., sc. 1, *Hubert* produces a paper and bids the *Prince* to read it. The implication is, as to Shakespeare's design, that *Hubert*, having consented to kill the boy, subsequently obtained from his sovereign an official document authorizing the barbarous deed. In the next scene, when the *King* is denouncing his servant for the crime he has ordained and which he believes to have been committed, *Hubert*

shows the paper and exclaims "Here is your hand and seal for what I did." The tinkering Cibber, in making his alterations, was fussily solicitous for what he deemed regularity in the use of a stage property. There is an expressive couplet by Scott which well describes him:

"His ways were not ours, for he cared not a pin  
How much he left out or how much he put in!"

Quin subsequently acted *King John* in Shakespeare's play,—at Covent Garden, February 23, 1751,—Mrs. Cibber acting the original *Constance*: Barry appeared for the first time as *Falconbridge* and, strange to say, made no impression.

Mrs. Pritchard,—Quin's principal associate in the representation of Cibber's play,—an actress so versatile that she excelled equally in *Beatrice* and *Queen Gertrude*, and of such genius that she was deemed by contemporary judges supreme in *Lady Macbeth* and *Queen Katharine*, could not have failed to give a powerful and affecting impersonation of *Constance*. She was only thirty-four when she played the part for the first time, and her beauty, which is said to have been considerable in youth, had not yet faded. The *Constance* of history, born in 1164, was thirty-five at the time of the beginning of the actual occurrences involved in this tragedy, and thirty-eight at the



time of her boy's death, 1203. Prince Arthur was fifteen when he died. Anna Seward (1747-1809), who saw Mrs. Pritchard after she had grown old, says that her figure was then large and coarse and her features plain even to hardness, but that she was a just and spirited actress and a perfectly good speaker. An earlier record declares that her delivery, in dialogue, was never surpassed, that in her exact articulation not a syllable was ever lost, and that, while in comedy she was "inimitably charming," she was eminently excellent in all tragic characters requiring force of expression,—*Constance*, surely, being one of them. The part, in Cibber's play, is considerably mangled. Dr. Johnson's much quoted detraction of Mrs. Pritchard, whom he designated "a vulgar idiot," was unwarranted, and it has done her memory much injury.

#### DAVID GARRICK.

Garrick produced Shakespeare's tragedy, apparently unaltered, except by reduction of the text, February 20, 1745, at Drury Lane, five days after Cibber's "Papal Tyranny" had been presented at Covent Garden. The cast comprised Garrick as the *King*, Dennis Delane as *Falconbridge*, Edward Berry as *Hubert*, William Havard as *King Philip*, John Mills as *Salisbury*, Charles Macklin as *Cardinal Pan-*

*dulph*, Mrs. Cibber as *Constance*, Maria Macklin as *Prince Arthur*, and Mrs. Bennett as *Queen Elinor*. Contemporary opinion deemed Mrs. Cibber incomparable as *Constance*. Miss Seward says of this great actress that she had very pathetic powers; that her features, though not beautiful, were delicate and expressive, and that, as compared with Mrs. Pritchard, she was the "more elegant and fascinating,"—adding the qualifying remark that she "uniformly pitched her silver voice, so sweetly plaintive, in too high a key." Upon her performance as *Constance* an informing comment is made by Davies, who says that when making her final exit (Act III., sc. 4) her utterance of the words "O Lord, my boy! my boy!" was accompanied "with such an emphatical scream of agony as will never be forgotten by those who heard her."

Garriek as *King John* particularly excelled in his treatment of the scene in which *Hubert* confounds the vituperative *King* by showing the warrant for the murder of the *Prince*. His portrayal of distraction and anguish was marvellous in its effect of fidelity to nature. He snatched the paper from *Hubert's* hand, held it in a convulsive grasp, and, looking upward in a paroxysm of fear and horror, seemed completely overwhelmed with dread of Divine vengeance. It seems to have been in situations of this kind, exact-

ing the expression of poignant feeling and of the agony of contending passions, that Garrick, in tragedy, surpassed all the actors of his time. In the Death Scene, according to Davies, "the agonies of a man expiring in delirium were delineated with such wonderful expression in his countenance that he impressed uncommon sensations mixed with terror. . . . Every word of the melancholy news uttered by *Falconbridge* seemed to touch the tender strings of life till they were quite broken, and he expired before the unwelcome news was told." The *King* has been delirious, but is not so when expiring; he is agonized, and his life hangs by a thread.

Garrick's preference, it is recorded, was for *Falconbridge* rather than for *King John*, but when he appeared in that part, 1754, assigning the *King* to Mossop, he disappointed both his public and himself,—apparently because he lacked the physical stature, the truculent aspect, and the muscularity appropriate to the character. King George the Second, who saw the performance, and for whose opinion of it Garrick unluckily asked, said that the "drawing was too bold and the coloring overcharged and glaring." As *King John*, also, Garrick appears to have been somewhat excelled,—viewing the assumption as a whole,—by both Mossop and Sheridan.





*From an Old Print*

*Author's Collection*

**WILLIAM C. MACREADY AS KING JOHN**

*"They burn in indignation. I repent:  
There is no sure foundation set on blood,  
No certain life achieved by others' death."*

**ACT IV., Sc. 1**



## VARIOUS PLAYERS.

Other prominent representatives of Shakespeare's *King John* (not Cibber's) on the British Stage were Dennis Delane, 1737; Henry Mossop, 1754; Luke Sparks, 1758; Thomas Sheridan, 1760; William Powell, 1766; Samuel Reddish, 1774; John Henderson, 1777; John Philip Kemble, 1783; Edmund Kean, 1818; W. C. Macready, 1823; Charles Mayne Young, 1827; John Vandenhoff, 1834; Samuel Phelps, 1844; Charles Kean, 1852; Walter Montgomery, 1865; William Creswick, 1873; and Herbert Beerbohm-Tree, 1889.

Delane's assumption is mentioned, not extolled. In copiousness and resonance of voice Mossop surpassed the noted actors of his period: he was specially suited to parts requiring the strong utterance of tumultuous passions, and according to contemporary testimony he gave a splendid performance of *King John*. Davies declares that "he was nearer, in feeling the throes of a guilty mind and in conveying them to his auditors, than either Quin or Garrick." Sparks, a talented Irish actor (died, 1768), whose repertory included *Cardinal Wolsey*, *Cassius*, and the *King*, in both parts of "King Henry IV.," gave a respectable performance. Sheridan's personation of *King John* (given, December 17, 1760, at Drury Lane, in association



with Garrick as *Falconbridge* and Mrs. Yates as *Constance*) was considered by his son, Richard Brinsley,—whose judgment in dramatic matters might well be deemed conclusive,—his best professional achievement. Churchill's testimony, though qualified, is favorable:

"Next follows Sheridan. . . .

His action's always strong, but sometimes such

That Candor must declare he acts too much. . . .

In royal *John*, with *Philip* angry grown,

I thought he would have knock'd poor Davies down. . . .

But spite of all defects his glories rise,

And Art, by judgment formed, with Nature vies.

Behold him sound the depth of *Hubert's* soul,

Whilst in his own contending passions roll;

View the whole scene, with critic judgment scan,

And then deny him merit if you can.

Where he falls short 'tis Nature's fault alone,

Where he succeeds the merit 's all his own."

Strange are the differences of critical opinion! "Sheridan," said Dr. Johnson, "excels in plain declamation, though he can exhibit no character." Powell is said to have lacked weight and force as *King John*. Neither Reddish nor Henderson gained favor in the part,—though both, by natural qualification, would seem to have been well fitted to play it. Young was esteemed almost as good in it as Kemble, whose example he closely followed. Vandenhoff, stately and correct, a close student and a fine artist, must have

been effective in it, but a particular account of his acting of it eludes inquiry.

## JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE.

When Kemble, aged twenty-six, determined to act *King John*, he conferred with Sheridan,—who had been so highly successful and distinguished in the part,—then aged sixty-two, and for seven years retired from the Stage, and induced the veteran to read it to him. “I asked Kemble how he read it,” says Boaden, “and he answered, ‘Very finely.’” The incident is pleasingly indicative of sense and modesty on one side and practical kindness on the other. The old actor probably, as Boaden supposes, read the part to the younger very much as he had been accustomed to play it, and Kemble, no doubt, profited by the suggestions he derived from Sheridan’s experience and example. His style, however, was strongly individual, and when he acted *King John*, December 10, 1783, at Drury Lane, he gave an original performance. The critics of the period, we are informed, said that he was “too cold and too artificial,” and that in the Temptation Scene with *Hubert* he was “too solemn and too monotonous.” His biographer, who does not anywhere palliate his defects, exclaims, with natural impatience, “Enough of this *too* much regarded nonsense!”; and then he records this judgment:

"The most cold-blooded, hesitating, cowardly, and creeping villany that ever abused the gift of speech found in Kemble the only powers competent to give it utterance: and if I were to select a scene in the whole compass of the Drama more appropriate to him than any other I should fix upon this noiseless horror, this muttered suggestion of slaughterous thought, on which the midnight bell alone was fitted to break, by one solitary, undulating sound, that added to the gloom. The scene where he was parched up by the poison was equally skilful."

Kemble's chief associates in that representation of the tragedy were Mrs. Siddons, who then acted *Constance* for the first time; William Smith as *Falconbridge*, Bensley as *Hubert*, Aickin as *King Philip*, Barrymore as the *Dauphin*, Packer as *Cardinal Pandolph*, and Mrs. Hopkins as *Queen Elinor*.

#### EDMUND KEAN.

Edmund Kean appeared as *King John* for the first time, June 1, 1818, at Drury Lane, giving an impersonation which found admirers and was called impressive. He did not, however, rise to the height of Kemble's performance, which had not been forgotten: he probably did not find the part inspiring, and he soon discarded it. No record occurs of his appearance in it later than 1818. He caused his strongest effects in the scene of the *King's* outburst



of fury against *Cardinal Pandulph*, and in the Temptation Scene with *Hubert*. In the latter effective situation he made a thrilling use of the hoarse, terror-moving tones of his peculiar voice, and of a sinister, malignant, speciously insinuating manner, slowly approaching the theme of the murder, and reaching it at last with a deadly intensity. He was careful in the Death Scene, while making it effective, not to overdo, but to evince the exhaustion of vital power—as Garrick and Kemble had done, before him.

WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY.

Macready revived “King John,” October 24, 1842, at Drury Lane. The scenery, painted by Telbin, was elaborate and sumptuous. The costumes were correct. The stage-management was scrupulously careful. The cast,—aside from Macready, who personated *King John* and whose embodiment was deemed by authoritative critics one of his greatest achievements,—included Helena Faucit as *Constance*, J. R. Anderson as *Falconbridge*, Samuel Phelps as *Hubert*, John Ryder as *Cardinal Pandulph*, and Miss Ellis as *Queen Elinor*. Macready had played *King John* eighteen years before (in the autumn of 1824, at Drury Lane), he long retained the part in his repertory, and he gained renown in it; but he seems not ever to have

entirely satisfied himself by his performance. His acting, in the last scene, was accounted perfection. "In a death scene," says a careful contemporary reviewer, "Macready never fails: those who have seen his *King John* or *Lear* will want no arguments in support of this assertion." The lightning-like celerity with which the commingled followers of *King John* and *King Philip* parted and ranged themselves in opposing groups, when animosity flamed out between the monarchs, as the French *King* exclaims "England, I'll fall from thee" (Act III., sc. 2), is mentioned as having caused a thrilling effect of brilliant animation and as specially indicative of the thoroughness of Macready's stage management.

#### SAMUEL PHELPS.

Phelps revived "King John," September 30, 1844, acting the *King*. His chief associates in the representation were Henry Marston as *Falconbridge*, George Bennett as *Hubert*, and Mrs. Warner as *Constance*. His performance of the *King* elicited warm commendation, but by one censor he was requested to be careful "lest he unconsciously act Macready's instead of his own conception of the character." This was a veiled cavil. Phelps admired Macready and profited by professional association with him, but he

was of an exceedingly independent mind and not an imitator. He did not retain *King John* in his regular repertory, but twice after his retirement from Sadler's Wells he played the part in London revivals,—November 4, 1865, and September 24, 1866, at Drury Lane. In 1865 J. R. Anderson was the *Falconbridge* with him and Laura Addison the *Constance*. In 1866 Barry Sullivan was the *Falconbridge* and Mrs. Herman Vezin the *Constance*.

## CHARLES KEAN.

Charles Kean, as an actor, was compelled to make his way under the serious disadvantage of being the son of a distinguished father. Nothing that he could do would have commended him, to the enthusiasts of the illustrious Edmund, as anything but a second-rate performer. He was hampered, also, by certain physical disadvantages: his face, though full of character and intelligence, was not handsome, his voice was somewhat harsh, and his utterance was, at times, catarrhal. He, nevertheless, was a great actor. He did not possess the genius which almost universal testimony assures us was possessed by his father; but he acted several of the great Shakespearean parts, and some others both in tragedy and in what has come to be called "melodrama," in a great manner, and he



was thoroughly an artist. Macready was the dramatic chieftain at the time when he came on the scene, and Phelps was also established in public favor. Censure of Charles Kean, accordingly, might from the first have been confidently expected. It certainly was supplied, beginning early and continuing long. The worshippers of the elder Kean and the adherents of Macready and of Phelps were all factious to oppose him, and of course there were persons to whom, without prejudice, his personality and his style were distasteful. He found admirers, though, and in time he conquered a place for himself and became powerful, both as manager and actor.

Kean's impersonation of *King John* was among the best, certainly among the most original and strongly characteristic, of his many fine achievements. His first performance of the part was that which he gave in New York, November 16, 1846, at the old Park Theatre. His production of the tragedy was effected with scrupulous attention to every detail of scenery and costume. The stage setting was magnificent. The cast of parts was exceptionally powerful. Among the participants in the representation were George Vandenhoff as *Falconbridge*, Thomas Barry as *King Philip*, James Stark as *Louis, the Dauphin*, Charles Bass as *Cardinal Pandulph*, John Dyott as *Hubert*, Charles Fisher as *Robert Falconbridge*, Frank S.

Chanfrau as *Salisbury*, George Andrews as *Pembroke*, David H. Anderson as the *English Herald*, Mrs. Kean (Ellen Tree) as *Constance*, Mrs. Abbott as *Queen Elinor*, Susan Dennin as *Prince Arthur*, and Kate Horn as *Blanch*. Justice was done to the play, alike in garniture and acting, yet only eighteen performances of it were given and, as recorded by Vandenhoff, the receipts on the most lucrative night amounted to scarcely \$800.

Kean acted *King John* for the first time in England, February 9, 1852, at the London Princess' Theatre, of which he had then become sole manager. His revival of the play on that occasion was even more elaborate and splendid than the one he had accomplished in America. His management of the Princess' had begun with a presentment of "The Merry Wives of Windsor." "King John" was the second of Shakespeare's plays offered by him at that theatre, and, fairly, it should be considered the first of the brilliant series of the brilliant historical pageants with which he gratified the public and enhanced the lustre of his professional renown. In his last season as manager of the Princess' "King John" was repeated,—October 17, 1858. Mrs. Kean was the performer of *Constance*, in both revivals. Cole, in his "Life of Charles Kean," says of her performance that "never was a character presented with more true feeling and

natural pathos." In the first of the revivals here mentioned Kate Terry was the *Prince Arthur*. Kean's *King John*, which I saw in 1865 and which I vividly remember, was grisly and terrible in the scene of the incitement of *Hubert* to murder the *Prince*: he spoke in a horrid, convulsive whisper and the aspect of him was baleful: the curious quality of dreadful menace in repose, which characterized Kean, was specially conspicuous in the beginning of this passage, and the tense quiet and attention of his audience was a significant tribute to his reality of effect. His assumption of a fatherly, protective air toward the boy *Arthur*, transparently specious to the spectator, was furtively sinister and hideous. His defiance of the *Cardinal* was splendidly impetuous and his Death Scene was exceedingly pathetic.

GUSTAVUS VAUGHAN BROOKE.

Gustavus V. Brooke, whose repertory included twenty-seven of Shakespeare's greater characters, acted *King John* and *Falconbridge*. He was the *King John*, at Manchester, November 8, 1847, when Isabella Glyn, subsequently so highly distinguished, made her first appearance on the stage, acting *Constance*. He was then twenty-nine, and that appearance was his first in that character. A con-





*From an Old Print*

*Author's Collection*

CHARLES KEAN AS *KING JOHN* AND MRS. CHARLES KEAN AS  
*CONSTANCE*

CONS. "Thou monstrous injurer of heaven and earth . . ."

KING JOHN. "Bedlam, have done!"

ACT II., SC. 1



temporary critic said it was "a mixed performance, some passages of it,—the famous one with *Hubert*, for instance,—being given with great delicacy and truth of conception." Brooke's genius in acting was extraordinary, but impetuosity of temperament, exceeding conviviality, and recklessness in the conduct of life combined to mar his art and to bar him from the full measure of greatness that was surely within his reach. He accomplished much; he might have accomplished much more. His professional career extended over a period of thirty-two years, in Great Britain, America and Australia, and at the comparatively early age of forty-nine he perished in the wreck of the steamship *London*, which foundered in the Bay of Biscay.

## HERBERT BEERBOHM-TREE.

Beerbohm-Tree first appeared in "King John,"—playing the *King*,—"under the direction of Mr. Edward Hastings," September 19, 1889, at the Crystal Palace, Sydenham. F. H. Macklin then appeared with him as *Falconbridge*, James Fernandez as *Hubert*, Amy Roselle as *Constance*, and Henrietta Lindley as *Queen Elinor*. On September 20, 1899, he revived the tragedy, at Her Majesty's Theatre,—the late Lewis Waller then appearing with him as *Falconbridge*, Master Charles Sefton as *Arthur*, Julia



Neilson as *Constance*, and Isabella Bateman as *Queen Elinor*. In the former presentment Shakespeare's design was much more faithfully followed than it was in the latter, though this is properly to be considered Tree's definitive venture with this play. In making his stage version the actor obviously intended to contrive a vehicle for spectacle, and also he sought to accelerate movement, which, in the original, is slow. The former purpose he fulfilled: the latter he did not accomplish, since he only disjointed the fabric which he had endeavored to reconstruct. Tree divided the play into three acts, the first ending with the capture of *Prince Arthur*, the second ending with his death, sequent on his attempt to escape from the Castle of Falaise. The Third Act was devoted to depiction of the disasters which befall *King John*, terminating with his miserable death. The scenic setting was extremely rich. The costumes, armors, heraldic devices, etc., designed by Percy Anderson, were archæologically correct. The most impressive of the scenic sets were those of the sombre, massive interior of Northampton Castle, with which the performance began, and the Orchard at Swinstead Abbey,—a delicate, beautiful picture,—wherein at last the wretched monarch feels that his "soul hath elbow - room" and where the "one poor string" that stays his ebbing life breaks and parts.

A scene, devised by Tree and represented wholly in pantomime, was interpolated, showing the signing of Magna Charta, at Runnymede. In itself it was striking, but as an accessory to Shakespeare's tragedy it was inappropriate and obstructive. A principal defect of that tragedy, as an acting play, is its discursiveness. The need in adapting it for representation is to unify its ingredients and clarify and hasten its progress by judicious omission and transposition. The interjection of a tableau, on an extraneous historical subject, merely impedes action and wastes time. Tree's personation of *King John* was one of the best of his Shakespearean achievements. The craft, the fitful power, the alternation of duplicity and wrath, the vacillating will, and ultimately the perplexed and wretched condition of the monarch were well apprehended by him, and they were clearly and simply portrayed. He was not fully adequate to the grim, grisly, dreadful ordeal of the Temptation Scene, but in the quarrel with the "discontented peers" and in the agonizing Death Scene he was finely effective.

Lewis Waller, an actor of keen intelligence, exceptional discretion, and much vigor, though monotonous and somewhat colorless, was by many observers accounted perfection as *Falconbridge*. The part is a brilliant one, and any trained, competent actor can

always be effective in it, especially in the earlier scenes. Miss Neilson personated *Constance* with some force and simulated feeling, though with much obvious effort. She had, however, bestowed so little care on the study of the text that when, in the distracted mother's culminating frenzy (Act IV., sc. 3), where continuous action is essential, she spoke the words "My grief walks up and down with me," she stood still near the centre of the stage. A prominent feature of Tree's later revival of "King John" was the baleful assumption of *Queen Elinor* by Miss Bateman.

#### THE LADY CONSTANCE.

The successors, on the British Stage, to Mrs. Cibber as *Constance* included Mrs. Giffard, 1747; Margaret Woffington, 1754; George Anne Bellamy, 1758; Mrs. Yates, 1760; Mrs. Barry, 1774; Mrs. Crawford (then Mrs. Dancer), 1783; Sarah Siddons, 1792; Mrs. Powell, 1800; Mrs. Litchfield, 1803; Mrs. Macauley, 1818; Harriet Faucit, 1823; Mrs. Bunn, 1824; Ada Clifton, 1834; Helena Faucit, 1836; Mrs. Charles Kean, 1852; Mrs. Charles Young, 1859 (and as Mrs. Herman Vezin, 1866), Laura Atkinson, 1865; Miss Clive, 1873; Amy Roselle, 1889; and Julia Neilson, 1899. Several of those performers, in this part,



have already been described; Mrs. Siddons and Miss Faucit were, in most respects, the best.

## MRS. SIDDONS.

Mrs. Siddons, according to several expert contemporary authorities on the subject, was supreme in such parts as *Mrs. Haller*, in "The Stranger"; *Elivira*, in "Pizarro"; *Belvidera*, in "Venice Preserved"; *Isabella*, in "The Fatal Marriage"; *Queen Katharine*, in "King Henry VIII.," and *Constance*, in "King John." John Ballantyne, Scott's trusted friend, writing about her farewell night in Edinburgh, declares that "No sculptor or painter, in the sublimest flights of his fancy, ever embodied; no poet, in the most luxuriant indulgence of his imagination, ever described, a creature so formed, so gifted, to agitate, to awe and astonish mankind by her professional powers as her whose matchless form, face, voice, and eye are now finally withdrawn!" Her biographer Campbell commemorates her *Constance* in these instructive words:

"I see her in my mind's eye the embodied image of maternal love and intrepidity; of wronged and righteous feeling; of proud grief and majestic desolation. With what unutterable tenderness was her brow bent over her pretty *Arthur* at one moment, and in the next how nobly drawn back, in a look at her enemies that dignified her

vituperation. When she patted *Lewis* [the *Dauphin*] on the breast, with the words, 'Thine honor! Oh, thine honor!' there was a sublimity in the laugh of her sarcasm. I could point out the passages of hurried and of deliberate gesture which would have made you imagine that her very body seemed to think. Her elocution varied its tones from the height of vehemence to the lowest despondency, with an eagle-like power of stooping and soaring, and with the rapidity of thought."

The views expressed by Mrs. Siddons illuminatively indicate how she played *Constance*:

"In the performance of *Constance* great difficulties, both mental and physical, present themselves; and perhaps the greatest of the former class is that of holding the mind reined-in to the immediate perception of those calamitous circumstances which take place during the course of her sadly eventful history. The necessity for this severe abstraction will sufficiently appear when we remember that all those calamitous events occur while she herself is absent from the stage, so that this power is indispensable for that reason alone, were there no other to be assigned for it: because if the representative of *Constance* shall ever forget, behind the scenes, those disastrous events which impel her to break forth into the overwhelming effusions of wounded friendship, disappointed ambition, and maternal tenderness, upon the first moment of her appearance in the Third Act, . . . if the mind of the actress for one moment wanders from those distressing events, she must inevitably fall short of that high and glorious coloring which is indispensable to the painting of this magnificent portrait. The quality of abstraction has always appeared to me necessary in the

art of acting. . . . Whenever I was called upon to perform the character of *Constance* I never, from the beginning of the play to the end of my part in it, once suffered my dressing room door to be closed, in order that my attention might be constantly fixed on those distressing events which, by this means, I could plainly hear going on upon the stage, the terrible effects of which progress were to be represented by me. Moreover, I never omitted to place myself, with *Arthur* in my hand, to hear the march, when, upon the reconciliation of *England* and *France*, they enter the gates of Angiers to ratify the contract of marriage between the *Dauphin* and the *Lady Blanche*; because the sickening sounds of that march would usually cause the bitter tears of rage, disappointment, betrayed confidence, baffled ambition, and, above all, the agonizing feelings of maternal affection to gush into my eyes. In short, the spirit of the whole drama took possession of my mind and frame, by my attention being incessantly riveted to the passing scenes."

This quality of "severe abstraction" did not, however, at any time prevent the great actress from maintaining perfect control over her feelings and the machinery of her art. Charles Young related that early in his career he acted with her, at Edinburgh, in "The Gamester," playing *Beverley*, and that in one passage (Act V., sc. 4) her apparent emotion was so intense and she uttered it in an exclamation of such piercing grief that his throat swelled, his utterance was choked, he was unable to speak,—as he ought to have done immediately,—and could not do so until



she, putting the tips of her fingers on his shoulder, said, in a low tone, "Mr. Young, recollect yourself." Another instructive anecdote relates that, while playing *Constance*, she could so "rain a shower of enforced tears" as to wet the collar of *Prince Arthur*—and, a few moments later, having left the scene, walk composedly to her room, taking snuff (of which she was fond) and admonishing a young actor who had been giving way to "real feeling" on the stage, saying: "Kelly, you *feel* too much: if you feel so much you will never make an actor."—As *Constance* Mrs. Siddons wore a body-dress of black satin, with a train of the same material and color, and a white petticoat, arranged according to the taste and fashion of her own period. Also, she "dishevelled even her hair with graceful wildness."

#### HELENA FAUCIT.

Helena Faucit first acted *Constance*, October 6, 1836, at Covent Garden, when Macready there presented "King John"; she again played the part with him, October 24, 1842, when he revived the tragedy at Drury Lane, but after his retirement from management (June 13, 1843) she practically relinquished it. Mention is made of her having acted it, later, during one engagement at Dublin and one at Glas-

gow. Martin, her husband and biographer, assigns as her reason for laying *Constance* aside that "the adequate production of 'King John' became all but impossible, either in London or the provinces," after the dissolution of Macready's Drury Lane company. Her personation of this character, even when first given, was highly esteemed,—the chief adversity of judgment upon it being that it lacked massive physical power. The actress, when playing *Constance*, seems to have fully indulged her propensity to emotional abandonment: "as she left the scene," says Martin, referring to the final exit of the distraught mother, "she was generally carried fainting to her room." That fact indicates more of an hysterical temperament than of histrionic art. The performance, nevertheless, was one of great and various merit. Majesty, which so often, on the stage, is depicted as merely self-importance, was not assumed but incarnated. Miss Faucit appears to have possessed intrinsic regality. There was, we are told, a superb use of pathos in her utterance of the speech of denial to the summons of the *Kings*:

"I will instruct my sorrows to be proud. . . .  
Here I and sorrows sit;  
This is my throne, bid kings come bow to it!"

And her delivery is said to have been "indescribably

sweet" of the beautiful lines,—the perfection of poetic expression—

"Of Nature's gifts thou may'st with lilies boast  
And with the half-blown rose."

One ardent enthusiast of her acting,—George Fletcher, author of "Studies of Shakespeare" (1847),—particularly dwells on the felicity of her treatment of this passage, declaring that "nothing could be more beautiful in itself or more true to nature and to the poet than the graceful fondness with which, after throwing herself on the ground, in the climax of her grief, she looks up and raises her hand to play with the ringlets of her boy as he stands drooping over her."

#### AMERICAN STAGE.—EARLY REPRESENTATIONS.

"King John" was acted for the first time in America, January 16, 1769, at the John Street Theatre, New York,—David Douglass playing the *King*, in association with Lewis Hallam as *Falconbridge*, John Henry as *Hubert*, and Margaret Cheer as *Constance*. On February 28, 1798, the tragedy was presented at the Park Theatre, with Thomas A. Cooper as *King John*, John Hodgkinson as *Falconbridge*, Hallam as *Hubert*, and Mrs. Melmoth as *Constance*. "King



John" was included in Charles Kemble's repertory, on the occasion of his visit to the United States in 1832, when, in association with his brilliant daughter Fanny (Mrs. Pierce Butler), he captivated public favor at the old Park Theatre. It was presented October 1. Kemble played *Falconbridge*. Fanny Kemble was the *Constance*, Thomas Barry the *King*. On March 30, 1834, "King John" was acted at the Bowery Theatre, the elder J. B. Booth playing the *King*. On November 16, 1846, a splendid revival of the tragedy was accomplished at the Park, Charles Kean acting *King John*, with George Vandenhoff as *Falconbridge*, John Dyott as *Hubert*, Mrs. Kean (Ellen Tree) as *Constance*, and Susan Dennin as *Prince Arthur*. Kean again played *King John* when he made his fourth and last visit to New York, in 1865. On April 14, 1848, at the Bowery Theatre, T. S. Hamblin produced the play, with Kean's scenery,—which had been bought for that house,—himself assuming the *King*, with Mrs. Shaw as *Constance*, John Ryder as *Falconbridge*, and John Gilbert as *Hubert*. Hamblin's son, billed as Master T. S. Hamblin, played *Prince Arthur*. The play was kept on the stage for five nights. On December 29, 1856, at the same theatre, John Brougham revived it, using much of the Kean scenery, with some modifications. Edward Loomis Davenport acted the *King*, Mrs.

Davenport was the *Constance*, William Wheatley *Falconbridge*, J. B. Howe *Hubert*, and Kate Reignolds *Prince Arthur*. The tragedy was produced at Booth's Theatre, May 25, 1874, with J. B. Booth, Jr., as *King John*, John McCullough as *Falconbridge*, Agnes Booth as *Constance*, Henry A. Weaver as *Hubert*, Minnie Maddern (now, 1916, Mrs. Harrison Grey Fiske) as *Prince Arthur*, and Mrs. H. P. Grattan as *Queen Elinor*. I find no other revival of it recorded till that made by Robert B. Mantell, in 1907. It will be seen, accordingly, that, on the American Stage, the principal and probably the only representatives of *King John* were David Douglass, Thomas A. Cooper, Thomas Barry, the elder Junius Brutus Booth, Charles Kean, Thomas S. Hamblin, E. L. Davenport, J. B. Booth, Jr., and Robert B. Mantell.

No positive, detailed information of any value is obtainable relative to the manner in which the play of "King John" was acted on the early American Stage. Douglass no doubt gave an acceptable performance of the *King*. Cooper was only twenty-two when he first played that part, but he had then been six years on the stage, he had performed the more exacting characters, among others, of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, and it is probable that he gave a creditable personation; he did not, however, retain *King John*

in his ample repertory (264 parts), and a careful search of many old records has not discovered a specific account of his acting of it. He was specially admired for his *Falconbridge*. Thomas Barry was one of those industrious, patient actors whom Fate ordains to do all things well and nothing greatly, to be faithful to every duty, through a long and toilsome life, and always to remain respected,—and poorly rewarded and undistinguished. “Virtue,” the old cynic Henry Clapp, Jr., used to say, “is its own—and only—reward!” Barry was long the stage manager of the old Park Theatre, and when Macready, at that house, played *King John*, 1826, he was the *Falconbridge*. The elder Booth is not extolled, for his personation of *King John*, in any of the various records of his remarkable career; but the actor who could portray as he did the remorse of *Sir Edward Mortimer* and the subtle malignity and demoniac fury of *Sir Giles Overreach* could not have failed to incarnate the baleful personality and fierce, contending passions of *King John*. Hamblin, better fitted for characters of light calibre, such as *Duke Aranza* and *Petruchio*, than for those which require portrayal of tragic conflict and poignant suffering, proved unequal to *King John*, nor could the *Constance* of his associate, that powerful actress Mrs. Shaw, redeem Brougham’s production of the play from precipitate



failure. E. L. Davenport, one of the best of actors (so versatile that he charmed the public in parts as various as *Hamlet*, *St. Marc*, *Sir Giles*, *Damon*, and the sailor boy *William*), must surely have excelled in *King John*. His *Sir Giles* was second to that of only the elder Booth. J. B. Booth, Jr., though heavy and uninteresting as the *King*, was technically correct. I recall that his presentment of the tragedy was vitalized and made impressive by the dignity, tenderness, and fine art with which Agnes Booth played *Constance*, and by the manly, humorous, brilliant acting of John McCullough as *Falconbridge*. Merriment tinged with scorn glimmered like sunshine over this latter personation; the manner of it was bluff, the spirit of it was chivalrous, and at moments, with *Hubert* and with the dying *King*, it was rightly suffused with deep feeling.

The principal representatives of *Constance* on the American Stage (to recapitulate) were Margaret Cheer, 1769; Mrs. Melmoth, 1798; Fanny Kemble, 1832; Mrs. McClure, 1834; Mrs. Kean (Ellen Tree), 1846; Mrs. Shaw, 1848; Mrs. E. L. Davenport, 1856; Agnes Booth, 1874; Marie Booth Russell, 1907, and Florence Auer, 1914-'15. Mme. Modjeska, who acted *Constance*, though not often and never in New York, honored me by asking my counsel, before she revived "King John," as to the feasibility of condensing the

tragedy. She wished to revive the play solely for the sake of *Constance*, and, merely to expedite her work and fulfil her desire, as an act of friendship I made a version of it for her use, omitting the First Act and curtailing the other four. That version, with some modification, she used, but,—as it did not even remotely indicate what I deem proper treatment of the tragical history,—without mention of me as accessory to the barbarous dismemberment. Her object was to concentrate attention on *Constance*, and that object she accomplished. Her royal demeanor, mournful beauty, and great tenderness of feeling, combined with her beautiful art, made her performance distinguished, lovely, and pathetic. She seems to me to have been better fitted to the part than any other actress who has appeared since the time of Ristori. Her presentation of the garbled tragedy, however, was foredoomed to practical failure: *Constance* is not the central figure of the play and cannot be made so.

The chief players of *Falconbridge* on the American Stage were Lewis Hallam, 1769; John Hodgkinson, 1798; Thomas Barry, 1826; Charles Kemble, 1832; T. S. Hamblin, 1834; George Vandenhoff, 1846; John Ryder, 1848; William Wheatley, 1856; John McCulloch, 1874; and Francis McGynn, 1907. Fritz Leiber, a talented young actor, earnest in spirit and remarkably pictorial in aspect,—bearing a startling

resemblance to the portrait of the poet Schiller,—appeared in Mantell's later presentments of "King John."

ROBERT MANTELL'S PRODUCTION.

Mantell's production of "King John" was first effected, at the Grand Opera House, Chicago, November 18, 1907: it was exhibited in New York on March 8, 1909, at the New Amsterdam Theatre. He used the old stage version of the play (printed in French's "Standard Drama"), that had been sanctioned by the example of Charles Kean, but he varied it a little and divided it by a larger number of curtains than have generally been employed. The scenery was, in the main, appropriate and effective, though, like much of the scenery customarily provided for Shakespearean revivals on our Stage, it lacked the mellowness of color and the tinge of antiquity which would suggest the action of time and thus heighten the pictorial effect. Scenery, of course, should always be helpful of illusion and incidentally contributory to Acting. Literal reproduction of time-worn streets and buildings is not possible, nor is it desirable, but correctness of detail is, to some extent, practicable, and it helps to deepen the impression of truth. Soldiers after long and toilsome marches made as *King John's* soldiers must be





*From a Photograph by Matzene*

*Author's Collection*

**ROBERT B. MANTELL AS KING JOHN**

*"Here once again we sit, once again crown'd,  
And look'd upon, I hope, with cheerful eyes."*

**ACT IV., Sc. 2**



supposed to have made them when they arrive before Angiers should bear some marks, some indication, at least, of the effort and fatigue of travel. The soldiers in this production were as freshly apparelled as the ministrations of the costumer could make them.

This is the full cast of "King John," in Mantell's production of the tragedy in New York:

<i>King John</i> .....	Robert Mantell
<i>Prince Henry</i> .....	Lorraine Frost
<i>Prince Arthur</i> .....	Leila Frost
<i>Earl of Pembroke</i> .....	George Turner
<i>Earl of Essex</i> .....	Charles Keene
<i>Earl of Salisbury</i> .....	William Bowen
<i>The Lord Bigot</i> .....	Tefft Johnson
<i>Hubert de Burgh</i> .....	Ethelbert Hales
<i>Philip Falconbridge</i> .....	Fritz Leiber
<i>Robert Falconbridge</i> .....	Edward Lewers
<i>James Gurney</i> .....	Otto Brower
<i>Peter of Pomfret</i> .....	Walter Campbell
<i>Philip</i> .....	James Brophy
<i>Lewis</i> .....	George Stilwell
<i>Duke of Austria</i> .....	F. Dallas Cairns
<i>Cardinal Pandulph</i> .....	Guy Lindsley
<i>Chatillon</i> .....	L. Rogers Lytton
<i>A knight</i> .....	Olaf Skavlan
<i>A citizen of Angiers</i> .....	Oscar Pfefferic
<i>First attendant</i> .....	Frederick Baldwin
<i>Second attendant</i> .....	Edwin Lear
<i>Queen Elinor</i> .....	Lillian Kingsbury
<i>Constance</i> .....	Marie Booth Russell
<i>Blanch of Spain</i> .....	Edith Campbell
<i>Lady Falconbridge</i> .....	Josephine McCallum

#### MANTELL AS KING JOHN.

Mantell, in his impersonation of *King John*, steadily preserved that atmosphere of vague apprehension, of indefinite danger, of something terrible and afflicting



soon and suddenly to occur, which surrounds the character and indeed envelopes the whole play. The actor who is a scholar will, of course, avail himself of whatever biographical information he is able to obtain, relative to peculiarities of appearance and manner known to have been characteristic of any historic person whom he is desirous to represent; but the actor is not justified in going behind the poet's fiction in order to derive an ideal from the historian's alleged fact. Mantell respected that principle, consulting history only as to the personal appearance of the *King* and forming his ideal of the character exclusively from the study of Shakespeare's text. A pervasive excellence of his embodiment was his interfusion, from the beginning, of malignity with royal arrogance, duplicity with irascible valor, and a lurking incertitude beneath an outside show of power. That interfusion was not accomplished by any expedients of extravagant demeanor, nor by any exacerbations of the traditional Plantagenet temper (John, it is recorded, habitually swore "by God's teeth!"), but by aspect, movement, facial play, modulations of the voice, and such other "close denotements" of the personality as, while they cannot perhaps be precisely defined, are intuitively comprehended.

The actor endued the miserable sovereign at once with a dangerous personality, a nervous tempera-

ment, a disquieted mind, a sinister aspect, and an impetuous, irascible demeanor,—making him a man who, while bold in pretension and expeditious in movement, is, furtively, ill at ease, continually rancorous and capable of evil, and yet, at vital moments, weakly irresolute. His impersonation, accordingly, was all of one piece, so that when he reached the *King's* temptation of *Hubert* to do a murder he only fully revealed a nature that he had already indicated. That terrible speech of *King John* to *Hubert*,—"I had a thing to say,"—he spoke in a hollow undertone, placing, however, a distinct, blood-curdling emphasis on the concluding words—"Death"—"A grave!"—and enforcing them with gesture and glance so baleful, and of such fatal meaning, that the observer shuddered with horror. The sudden change to grisly exultance, with the exclamation, "I could be merry now!" intensified that impartment of dread. Indeed, the whole treatment of the Temptation Scene was admirable for its investiture of wickedness with plausibility, and for its subtle transparency,—the suggestion of treachery, cruelty, and hideous crime being made in such a way that *Hubert's* acceptance of it and compliance with it seemed unconstrained and natural. The *King's* convulsive, clinging grasp of the hand of *King Philip*, when *Cardinal Pandulph* threatens the curse of Rome, was a significant forerunner of that

submission which his shifting, irresolute mind will, in its subsequent access of infirmity, make to his spiritual lord, and it was all the more felicitous, as a touch of art, because it followed a splendid burst of passion in the defiance of the imperious priest. But his finest effects were obtained in the scenes with *Hubert* and in the Death Scene. His shrill, querulous denunciation of *Hubert*, after the defection of the distempered barons,—in the telling words, “*I had a mighty cause to wish him dead, but thou hadst none to kill him,*”—was exactly in the fitting tone of irrational, panic-stricken tremor and self-pity, while the frantic revulsion of feeling, when *Hubert* exclaimed, “*Young Arthur is alive,*” was rightly and most effectively made to express itself in hysterical clamor of relief.

A singularly fortunate make-up intensified every effect of the actor's art. Mantell's *King John*, upon his first appearance, was seen to be sick, feverish in body and distressed in mind. The aspect was singular, menacing, almost repulsive, and yet it was attractive,—possessing the reptile fascination of the serpent. The face was blanched. The gaze of the cruel blue eyes was sometimes concentrated, cold, and stony, sometimes wavering and shifting, as is the habit of self-conscious evil. The lips were full, red, and sensual. The head was crowned with a



shock of reddish hair. The cheeks were covered, but not concealed, by a red, matted beard. The body was slightly stooped, and, while it indicated physical strength, it conveyed a suggestion that the vital forces would not long prove adequate to sustain it. The movements were quick and, at some moments, spasmodic. A trick of plucking at a single hair of the beard expressively denoted a nervous, splenetic temperament, overstrained and with difficulty held in check. At first the voice of the *King* was clear, stern, and aggressive; later,—especially in the scenes with *Pembroke*, *Salisbury* and the other discontented lords, when he inquires “Why do you bend such solemn brows on me?” and after he has been apprised of the death of *Queen Elinor*,—it became thin, hoarse, and fretful. No essential detail of the part had been forgotten; no illuminative characteristic of it had been omitted. Thought was manifested in every device of treatment, and prudent care of the voice was shown in a fluent elocution, obedient to each ordainment of design. Those facts possess a decisive significance. Mantell brought to a task of uncommon magnitude a fine intuition, sedulous study, profound sincerity, and a rare faculty of impersonation, and so the large result of great talents and many years of experience was shown in a noble achievement.

The closing scene of Shakespeare's "King John,"—in its clear suggestion of pictorial, impressive investiture, in its marvellous fidelity (poetic, and not for even one instant degenerating toward realism) to the afflicting fact of a miserable death, and in the exceeding beauty of its language,—transcends description. In that scene Mantell was at his best; a somewhat rare felicity! for it is not always that a dramatic performance, even when it is of a high order, continues to be evenly, potently, and splendidly sustained until its end. The situation is a simple one, and all the more exacting for that reason. The *King* is dying—poisoned by a monk. "The life of all his blood is touched corruptibly." His agony has been terrible. He has been delirious, making "idle comment" and pathetically breaking into song. He momentarily recovers his reason, at the last. He will not die within four walls or beneath a roof. His soul must have "elbow room": "it would not out at windows nor at doors." He is brought into the orchard of the Abbey. The time is night. A wavering, golden light streams over the form of the dying man, and over the stalwart knights and courtiers who are grouped around him,—some of them in full armor, others in the sumptuous, colored raiment that *John*, like all the Plantagenets, liked to see. The body of the *King*, convulsed with pain, is shrunken

and withered. His hair and beard are dishevelled. His face is ghastly, and, as seen in the flickering light, it gleams with the gathering dew of death. He has thrown aside his rich attire, and is clad in black trunks and long black hose, with a white shirt, torn open at the throat; around his shoulders there is a loose robe. A more piteous spectacle,—made awful with mysterious, grim, and weird environment,—has not been seen; and Mantell made the illusion so complete that the theatre was forgotten. The thread-like, gasping, whispering, despairing voice in which he uttered the dying speeches of *King John*,—the abject, pitiful supplication that his “kingdom’s rivers” may be allowed to take their course through his “burnt bosom,”—could be heard only with tears. If pity and terror be the legitimate object of tragedy,—touching the heart and thrilling and exalting the mind,—Mantell, assuredly, accomplished its object. In this impersonation of *King John*, which he has seldom equalled, he evinced a broad comprehension of the character and enriched the Theatre with a Shakespearean figure not less magnificent than true. Wonderful death scenes have, at long intervals, been shown upon our Stage; those, for example, of Ristori as *Queen Elizabeth*; Dawison as *Othello*; Edwin Booth as *King Lear*; Henry Irving as *King Louis*; Salvini as *Corrado*: the death scene of Robert



Mantell's *King John* was worthy to be remembered with them. The art of it was supreme. The monition of it was such as should sink deep into every heart. To each of us the hour of death must come—the forlorn, abject isolation from humanity—the awful opening of that dread pathway which every human being must tread alone—the great mystery—the piteous solitude, when mortality breathes its last sigh and murmurs its last Farewell.

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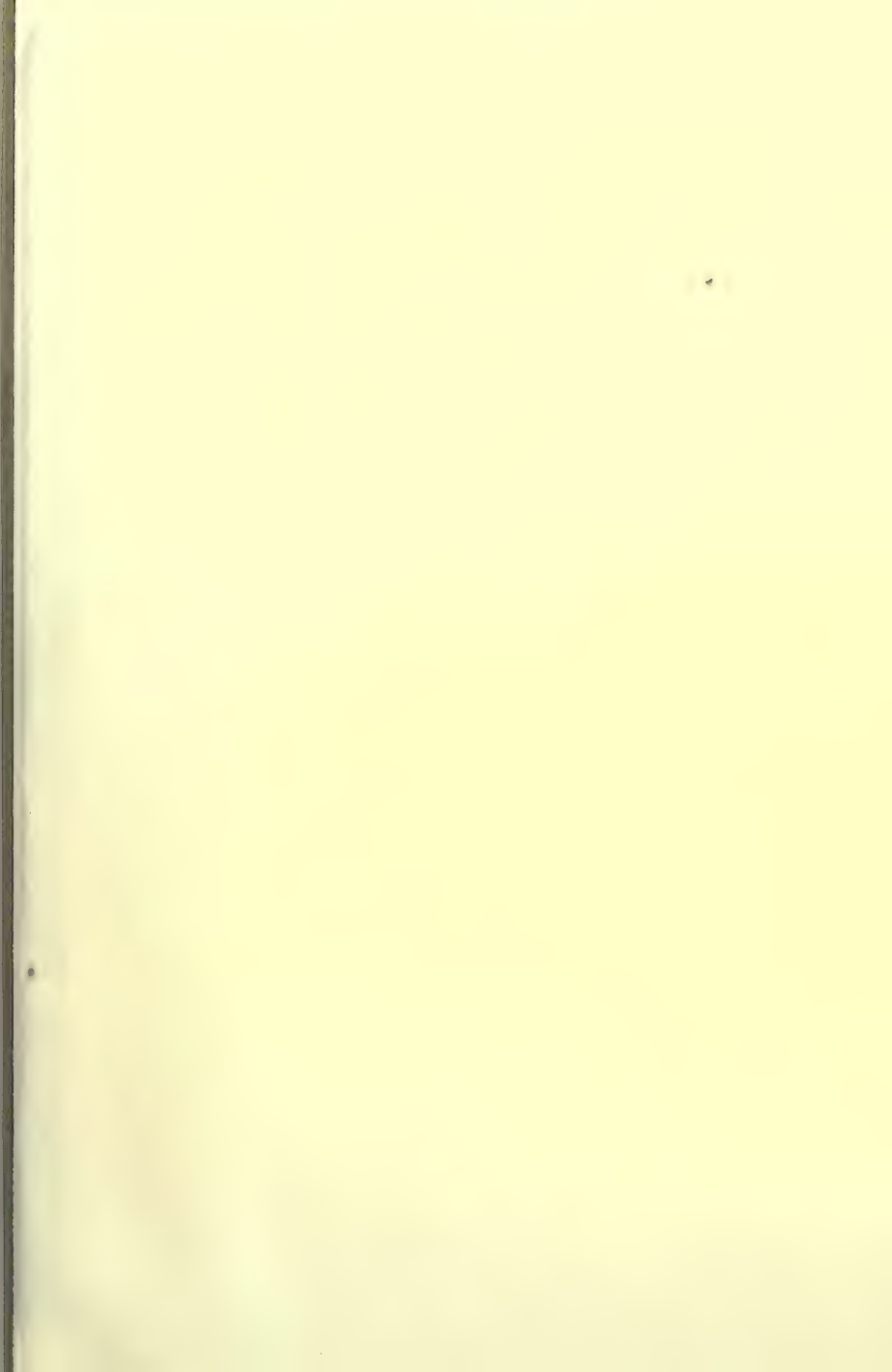
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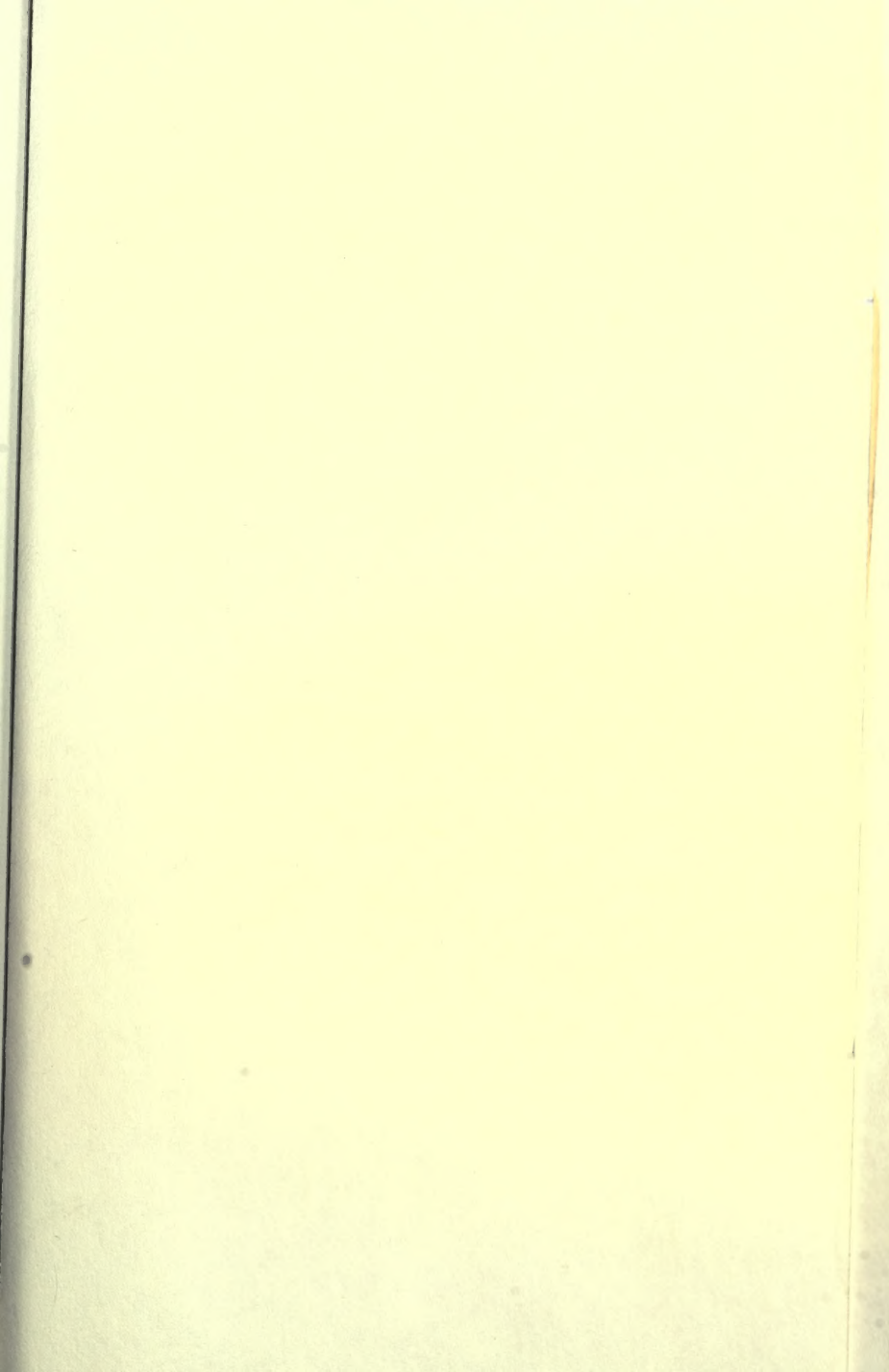
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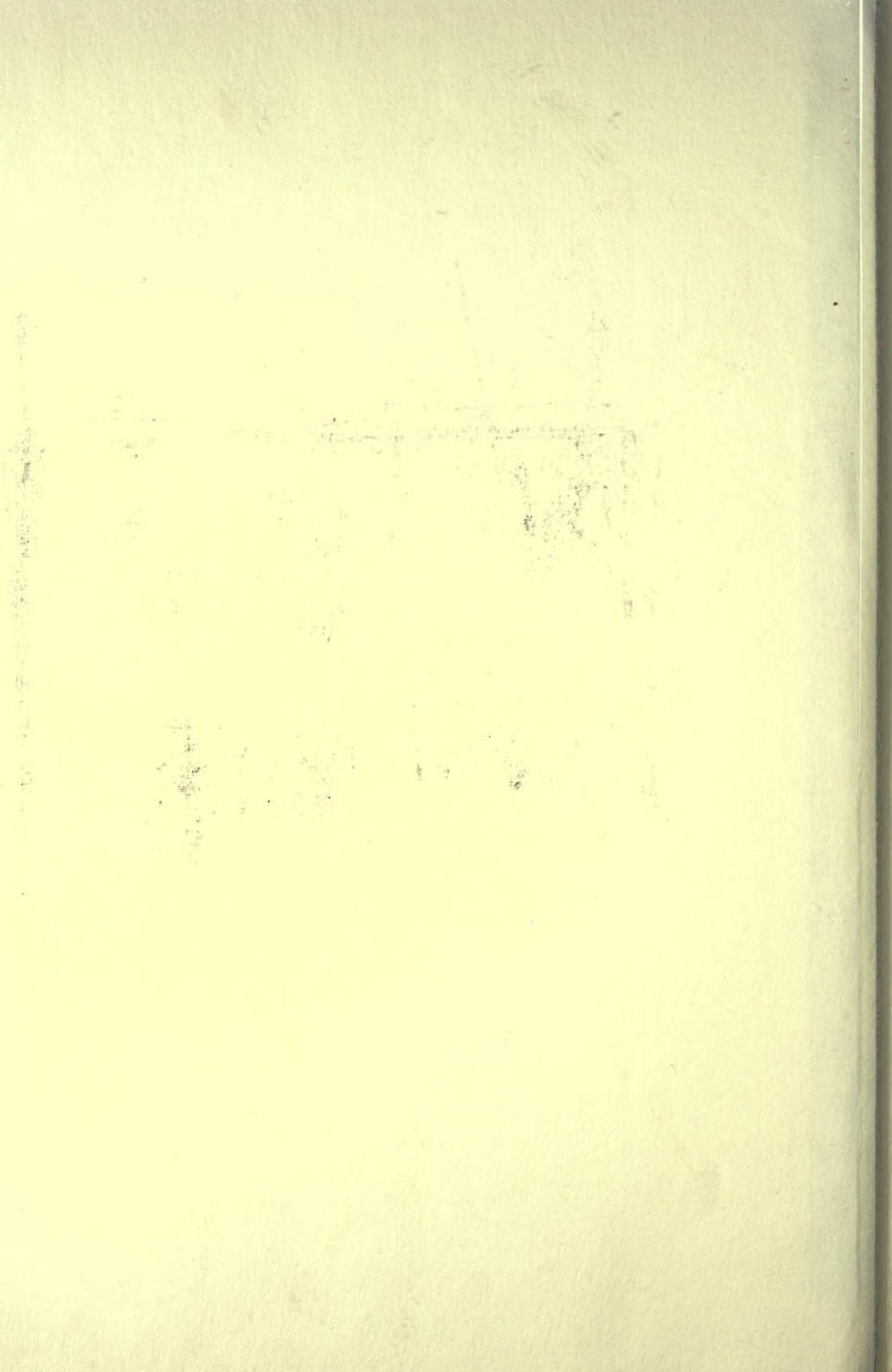
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